BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Mary Samson Hendrickson

Mary Samson Hendrickson was born July 20, 1927 in Keālia, Kaua'i. She is the third of five children born to Filipino immigrants Marcelino and Eulalia Samson.

Hendrickson was a student at Kapa'a School when the war began. At age fifteen, she was selected to serve as a WARD (Women's Air Raid Defense) stationed in Kaua'i. The women plotted aircraft positioning as it was picked up on radar. A group of the youngest WARDs, including Hendrickson, was nicknamed the *Hale* Brats.

During her stint as a WARD, she continued her schooling through a tutor. She later graduated from Roosevelt High School when her family moved to Honolulu. She worked part-time for the ***Honolulu Star-Bulletin*** and later taught in the public school system.

She was widowed in 1988, and is currently the art resource teacher at Ala Wai School.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Mary Samson Hendrickson (MH)

April 10, 1992

Mānoa, O'ahu

BY: Joe Rossi (JR)

JR: This is an interview with Mary Hendrickson on April 10, 1992, in her Mānoa home. The interviewer is Joe Rossi.

Miss Hendrickson, to begin with . . .

MH: Mary.

JR: Mary, could you please tell me a little bit about your family?

MH: All right, I have a picture here that I thought would sort of graphically show my family.

JR: Okay.

MH: My family was not poor, but we weren't rich. We were pretty well-off considering the type of community we came from. And my mom and dad were educated as much as was possible in those days. My mother was a registered nurse. She went to the Mary Johnson School of Nursing in the Philippines, and she was very proud of the fact that she completed and was able to get her certificate. And my dad went to schools in the Philippines and here in the islands. He went to what was called Mills [Institute]. Are you familiar with Mills? Well, Mills in those days in the islands meant Mid-Pacific Institute. He went there and he was very proud of it. That's it. And so he was the manager of several trading stores, as they were called in those days on Kaua'i. And then later on, after the war years, he had his own real estate firm and insurance firm. That's it.

JR: What year did your parents make it to Hawai'i?

MH: I think it was the turn of the century.

JR: Did they come together or separately?

MH: No, I think they came separately, but I'm not too sure about that. But they came together with my mother's good friend Mrs. Cortezan from Kōloa. Josefina was her name. Both of them were nurses. Mrs. Cortezan was the instigator of the group, and she was more active. My

mother was the follower. She brought my mother over. And Mrs. Cortezan was very active in nursing circles on the island of Kaua'i—like Woman of the Year, that sort of the thing—whereas my mother was more the reserved type and worked behind the scenes. But Mrs. Cortezan was most influential. And then her daughter Josefina—Jo we call her—she became superintendent of nurses on Kaua'i. That's about it.

JR: Could you tell me your parents' names?

MH: Yes, Marcelino—M-A-R-C-E-L-I-N-O—(Samson). And my mother was Eulalia, E-U-L-A-L-I-A. And her maiden name was Cortez, C-O-R-T-E-Z. My dad was Tagalog, and my mother was from the Pangasinan province. They're very proud of their backgrounds.

JR: And how many children did they have?

MH: Well, there were four here, but there was another on its way. We're five. I was a middle child, the forgotten child. (Chuckles) The middle-child syndrome. They either forgot my name or forgot to call me to the table. You know, like [the movie] *Home Alone*. I felt for that kid.

(Laughter)

MH: They'd look around and say, "Where's Mary?" Although my nickname was at that time Meng, M-E-N-G, which meant Mary, I guess.

JR: Oh, oh.

MH: And then later on, my husband, he heard my folks—my dad was the one that called me. He said, "What are they calling you?"

And I said, "Oh, Meng."

So when he bought a boat, he named the boat *Meng*, M-E-N-G.

JR: Oh, your husband's boat's name was *Meng*.

MH: *Meng*, M-E-N-G.

JR: And how many boys and girls?

MH: Two and two, and myself, so that's three and two.

JR: Three girls and two boys.

MH: Right.

JR: What year did you come along?

MH: Twenty-seven. Seven, twentieth, '27 [i.e., July 20, 1927].

JR: And exactly where were you born?

MH: In the little town of Keālia, K-E-A-L-I-A, right outside of Kapa'a. And the attending physician was Dr. [Webster] Boyden, B-O-Y-D-E-N, who later became an ophthalmologist. I used to get my glasses from him. He was a very distinguished gentlemen with a thin moustache.

JR: And where was the family living?

MH: We were living in—you mean at the time of my birth?

JR: Yeah.

MH: I imagine in the little town of Kapa'a, K-A-P-A-A. We always rented our homes then. We rented from the very wealthy Portuguese families, like the Aguiars and so forth. Lovely homes. And the Portuguese, as you well know, they love their wine. We always had a vine yard—or vineyard as it's called here in Honolulu—in the back of the house. And our first home, as I recall, that we rented from the lovely prominent Portuguese families was right in the middle of town facing the courthouse. And the vine yard was in the back, and once a year or twice a year, the landowners would come over and harvest the grapes and then squeeze the grapes to make wine. So we got a firsthand knowledge of how to make wine. There was the dark grapes and there were the white grapes, white wine and red wine. And also, there was a little oven in the back of the house, sort of circular in formation, that we dubbed the Hansel and Gretel oven.

(Laughter)

MH: You'd push the witch into the oven. And they made lovely Portuguese bread, long before it became famous.

JR: Yeah, yeah.

MH: *Pão doce*, sweet bread, and so forth. And what else did they make? Oh, they grew—we kept up with their customs, the Portuguese customs—Portuguese cabbage in the garden. And the cabbage leaves are very brittle and gray, unlike the usual green cabbage leaves. And I thought it was fascinating to see how they cook the cabbage. They cooked it with sausage, which they made, so there were hogs in the little vineyard also. And when they butchered the hogs, the hogs squealed a lot. Well, you would too if you were being killed.

(Laughter)

MH: They made sausages. Can you imagine, homemade sausages, nice big and fat things? And cabbage from the garden. So that was a soup with the Portuguese sausage and the cabbage, onions, and stuff from the garden, and then homemade wine, and then homemade bread, and then there was cheese. And then that was the feast.

I'm not Catholic, but I got the name Mary, so everybody thinks I'm Catholic. My middle name is Ruth, so Mary Ruth. The Catholics have what they call Holy Ghost Feast, and we

know that real well because they used to have it in the back of our yard or adjoining area. There were all Portuguese families lined up in a row—the Silvas, the Bettencourts, the Aguiars. And we loved them all, and they took us under their wing. And I really got to enjoy the culture of other nations, you might say, from a very early-on age, long before it became fashionable, starting with the Portuguese, first of all. They used to do their little dances and invite us to join in, but I especially enjoyed the Holy Ghost Feast. Then they said long prayers, and the priest was there from the neighborhood church and blessed the families and all of us. Even though we were non-Catholic, they included us in. And every time they'd cross themselves—are you Catholic?

JR: I was Catholic.

MH: Well, you know how you have to cross yourself?

JR: Yeah, yeah.

MH: We'd imitate, you know, the way. And when it was time to kneel, we would all kneel. And then when it was time to stand, we would all stand and make the sign of the cross. They would carry around those placards that showed the Virgin Mary and so forth. And since I had the name Mary, I was in already. They called me Maria. Ooh, I hate that. They said, "Maria, come over and sit here by us." But I especially enjoyed the Portuguese culture, to this day. And *malasadas* now is all the rage here, but we had them back there. But I enjoyed the sweet bread, 'cause they used to put little favors in the sweet bread, like little toys.

JR: Oh really?

MH: And if you came across it, that would have special significance, all depending on what the feast was for. So that was fun. We had Portuguese sweet bread, loaves or in circle formation, and individual, with our initials on them in frosting. That was mighty good. So that was my childhood. Not too much of the Filipino culture, because we were away from the plantation. What we encountered was more Portuguese, and I guess that's about it. A little bit of the Chinese and a little bit of the Japanese, but lots of the Portuguese. I have lot of friends, still today, who are the Portuguese persuasion.

JR: You were the only Filipino family in that area?

MH: Right. (Laughs) And my dad's store was further on down the street.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MH: I got to love wine through the Portuguese influence early in my life, 'cause all the gentlemen used to drink wine all the time.

JR: Not so much the women?

MH: Well, the men did the pressing of the wine in the back, as I recall. The women cleaned. They did the baking, and that's why I love the Portuguese bread, the white bread, circular in formation, and they used to break it with their hands. They told me, "Maria, you never cut

the bread," especially if it's freshly baked, because it'll just get stuck together. You broke the bread with your hands. And then with cheese or with homemade jelly or jam, that was a meal in itself.

JR: Oh yeah.

MH: Don't you think so? And with fruit, and then we'd pick the grapes from the vines. You know, you could stand under the grapes and reach up and pick clusters of grapes. Then what we used to do with the green grapes, we'd go in the front of the house and there was a courthouse. Voting used to occur once a year, or whenever voting time comes, and we used to throw green grapes at the people who came to vote.

(Laughter)

MH: And they stung. They hurt! And the chief of police was living right next door, Mr. Sheldon. He used to come over, and then we'd all be so frightened and run away. Then my folks would say, "Did you throw green grapes?"

And we were very truthful. We said, "Yes." Because otherwise we got a whipping, my dad would give us whippings.

JR: He didn't mind, so long as you told the truth?

MH: I guess. But even if you told the truth, you got whippings anyhow. He used to whip us with the strap that he used to sharpen his razor.

JR: Oh, a leather strap.

MH: Yeah, right.

JR: Mmm, that must have hurt.

MH: I guess. I was the middle child, I didn't mind it.

JR: You used to watch them making the wine. How did they make—I mean, I've never seen people make wine.

MH: Really?

JR: How did the Portuguese make wine?

MH: Well, first they'd pick the grapes, of course, and they'd have 'em in baskets. And then they'd wash them. And then I could say that they stomped on them with their feet, but they really didn't. They put them through the press, and then out came the grape juice. That was it.

JR: Oh yeah? Was this a big press, a small press?

MH: I guess a middle-size press.

JR: Wooden? Or metal?

MH: No, it was metal. I think they put the grapes through it, as I recall. But nobody stepped on the grapes. Also, they pounded it. They did it several means, whatever way. And then they strained the grapes.

JR: And they had some sort of casks or something they put it in?

MH: Right, right, to ferment. And I guess some of the people did root beer also. I would have loved to have tasted that root beer, but I didn't.

JR: I wonder how that's made.

MH: I only know the grapes, and I know how they did their breads and their soups and their sausages. That kind of spoiled me. From then on, I take pride in things that are handmade, hand-crafted, rather than store-bought stuff. I'd rather have a juicy (homemade) sausage that is ungainly in appearance and fat and ugly, rather than having those slim sausages that come off the assembly line. Same thing for breads. Somehow or other, you just cannot eat bread that comes out from the bakery.

JR: It doesn't taste the same?

MH: Yeah, and it looks so uniform.

(Laughter)

JR: It doesn't look man-made.

MH: Right, and it looks so sanitary. It's all wrapped up and whatnot. Like French bread, you know, they tuck it under their arms and get on their bicycle and bike away. So the things that you find in my home here too, it's one of a kind or something very special. I like that. Like Mary [Sano] brought over that little box from Japan, and I like that because it's made out of rice paper. And then, that little box is from Thailand. So every article in this house, object of art or whatever, tells us a story, how we got it. It's not something that we went to Liberty House and bought. Oh, except for these things. But even this nice crystal . . .

JR: These glasses.

MH: . . . was given to us by friends.

JR: So there's a story to it.

MH: Right, right. Came in a Liberty House box, but. . . . I like the hand-blown glass. And we have some [from] Portugal, like these with the blue tip. Stuff like that.

JR: Oh, those are nice.

MH: Yeah.

JR: Yeah. And it looks handmade.

MH: Right, so I cherish that.

JR: Can you describe the---you mentioned that they were nice homes that you were living in at that time.

MH: Right, right.

JR: What were they like exactly?

MH: Oh, I have to tell you this, a little story. Well, to a young child, the home always looks so much bigger and grander, right? And for several summers now, when my sisters would come through, we would go over to "KOW-wai," as we called it then, never Kaua'i. And I would be driving, and we'd say, "Let's go visit our old homes." There's the expression, "You can never go home," which is true. The homes that we lived in, now, they weren't well taken care of, so they had kind of like dilapidated, and they were kind of ugly.

My sister Louise—she was the last one that came through—she said, "What happened to all the acres and acres of lawn that we used to have?"

And so we visit home number one and home number two, because just two homes are left. And I said, "You know, I don't know whether it was in our imagination that we could just picture rolling lawns, or. . . . " I think it's two ways. One, from our imagination as a young child [where everything seemed large], and also progress.

Then we went to visit our church, which is All Saints' Church, and it was on the outskirts of town, Episcopalian. (Back) then there were acres and acres of manicured lawn, and there was a church that sat right in the middle, and then off to one side there was a gym, the gymnasium, and that's where we had Sunday school classes, as well as (athletic) games, etc. And when I took Louise over to see All Saints' Church, the church is now in the middle of a very thriving community of Kapa'a, and that's the tourist mecca. The area that the church is now situated in, it's called Waipouli Plantation, Coconut [Marketplace]. And that's the biggest little town on the island of Kaua'i now, where you go for all of your tourist attractions. We're right in the middle of the plantation, and here's this little old church surrounded by markets and fast-food houses, and fine dining houses, and other commercial places. And it looked so small, and it looked so dingy, and it doesn't look well cared for. No plants or shrubbery. And we looked at each other, and we thought, oh wow, is this our church? And we looked in and then we saw the stained glass window, something that looked familiar, and the pews. But it looks so small and shabby. But in our imaginations, it's still a (big and) beautiful spot in the middle of a garden of well-kept lawns. So you can never go home.

But our homes were always very large, and we all shared our bedrooms, and we had indoor plumbing, shall I say. My mom was one who went in for things like lovely china and crystal, and her teapot. I still have her teapot. When she passed away, then I got her teapot and her cups. We used to love to have afternoon teas—and I still do—where we had little sandwiches and stuff like that. And she told me it was a Filipino custom, but I never saw other Filipinos

doing it, just her. (Laughs) And then she and Mrs. Cortezan, they were great on giving teas, and they would set a fine table with lovely china and linen, which they worked on, embroidered. She took pride in her embroidery of fine linen. We had things for the table—the tablecloths—or for the beds. I'll always remember her pillow cases with monograms. And she did monogramming for other ladies in the community too. And the monograms always were three initials. And the middle initial---my maiden name was Samson, S-A-M-S-O-N. The middle initial always was the one in the middle, like it would be *S*. And then, since she was Marcelino, then would be *M* on the left, then *S*, and then *E* on the right. I always used to say, "How come we don't have *S* on the end," because it makes sense.

She says, "No, you put it in the middle, because that's the surname."

I thought that was lovely, beautifully raised embroidery. I wish I had some of it. Frivolous, it's just stuff that you don't really need, but makes a difference between living and just existing. It was those finer things. And also, I remember all of those little extras that they gave us as kids. And since I was the neglected kid, I was kind of like shunted to one side. Can you just imagine what they did with the oldest and the youngest? For example, we had summer vacations every once in a while, and they would take us to a lovely home on the Hā'ena side, which is the east side of the island, where we'd go swimming, etc. They would rent a private home, and we would go there for maybe a week and just swim and play things like records. I remember the record player, 'cause I was really fascinated and you had to do it by hand.

JR: With a crank or something?

MH: Right. And then put the record on. I used to listen to all of the records, in those days, two sides of the record. And other homes in Kapa'a didn't have it. But we were away on vacation now, and I had a chance to play the victrola, I guess they call it in those days. And the master's voice—it was his dog, and he's listening to this . . .

JR: Yeah, yeah.

MH: . . . like a megaphone.

JR: Yeah, it's like the RCA logo.

MH: Right, right, that's the RCA. . . . And His Master's Voice. He's wondering how come his master isn't around, and he can hear his master's voice coming out of the record player. I remember little things like that, that my parents did for us. That was a little bit extra from what my classmates experienced. For example, we all went to the beach, all the families did, but nobody had a home in the country for the weekend like we did. But you know, we never boasted. Although now, when I get together and we have lot of reunions, they always used to say, "Oh Mary, we loved to go over to your home, 'cause it was one of the largest. And we liked sitting down and listening to the radio, because it was such a huge radio." It looked like it does today for the—when you play records, one of those . . .

JR: Jukebox?

MH: Yeah, like a jukebox. A huge standing thing, and with lights flashing and all of that sort of thing. I don't know whether that improved the sound, but to this day they will say, "You know, we used to lie on the rugs"—we always had lovely rugs—"and listen to your radio," because their radio was so small and tinny. It had beautiful sounds.

And another thing that I remember, we took trips to Honolulu from Kaua'i. That was always a wonderful experience. And we stayed at the Blaisdell [Hotel]. And those days, the Blaisdell was pretty nice—or the Alexander Young Hotel. So us kids in the family, we took turns. If it was my turn, I got a chance to go to the big city, Honolulu. I thought that was real neat. It was right on Fort Street, the Blaisdell. And I used to get spending money, and right across was the five-and-dime called Kress, K-R-E-S-S. And my mom used to say, "Now, you're not going to get lost, are you?"

And I said, "No, this is Fort Street. I'm just going to go across and buy stuff." And you could walk up and down the counters and buy.

My classmates never had that experience, of course. But when I came back to Kaua'i, and they'd ask me where I had gone to, you know, you never boasted and said, "Oh, I did this, that," and anything else. I just said, "Oh, I just went over."

JR: So you would go with Mom or Dad . . .

MH: Right, and they do their business. And another experience that I always remember was McInerny—well, I don't know whether you remember. McInerny was such a big deal here. Well, it started out as a shoe store before it became general merchandise.

JR: Oh, I didn't know that.

MH: And they were the brothers, the McInerny brothers, two of 'em. Anyhow, they used to take over their shoes, samples of shoes, in their suitcases and stuff and stay at the little hotel in Līhu'e—not little, it was the biggest hotel in the island—and display their shoes. But what was remarkable to me was they'd put on only one side of the shoe. And when you say, "I like that shoe," then they'd bring out the other one. And my mom would buy her shoes from the hotel room. Yeah, and they'd call themselves drummers, D-R-U-M-M-E-R-S. Are you familiar with that term?

JR: That's like a salesman.

MH: Yeah, right, right. Only better.

JR: Door-to-door type.

MH: Right. They call themselves drummers, and then they had their men's shoes and women's shoes. And my mom would buy, say, several pairs. So to this day, when I buy shoes I buy several pairs also, although I think it's an extravagance. If it fitted real well, then she'd say, "Oh, I'll take it in two colors," black or brown, or something like that.

But my dad, he was the more frugal one. But he had beautiful penmanship, since he went to

MPI [Mid-Pacific Institute], and they stress the Palmer—are you familiar with the Palmer method?

JR: No, I'm not.

MH: Oh, they do a lot of practicing of whirls and twirls and loops and whatnot. And he was so proud of his penmanship, and I was too. But none of us wrote in the way he did. To this day, I just write with scrawls.

JR: Yeah.

MH: So our home was large and comfortable and it was gracious living, but you can't return home again. And our homes that we revisited shrank in size. The lawns are no longer spacious. And oh, the school---I jotted down notes, 'cause I knew you would ask me about these things.

JR: That's fine. Tell me about the schools.

MH: Not as imposing as it was in our youth. But Kapa'a School, the only old building that they have kept is the cafeteria—cafetorium, I guess they call it now.

JR: That's where you went, Kapa'a School?

MH: Right, right. And I always did well in school, if I can say that for myself, which leads up to the next segment of my life, the WARD [Women's Air Raid Defense]. Because I did well in school, I think, is why I was tapped to get into the WARD.

JR: Can I just interrupt for a second?

MH: Well, I don't know if you can! (Chuckles) Go ahead.

JR: I just want to know a little bit more about the school, what it was like back then and what subjects you were interested in.

MH: Well, this was a public school. People don't have much faith in the public schools, but I must say that on the island of Kaua'i, we did very well in the public schools. Except for one area, math. And to this day, it's still my lousy area. Well, thank you Mr. Yamada, but you weren't all that great.

(Laughter)

JR: He was your math teacher, I'm assuming.

MH: Right, at that time, when it made a difference, like algebra and stuff like that. And because we misbehaved in class—we were the good ones. We used to do what they call tracking system in the public schools. That means if you did well, when you went on to the next grade you would stay together, and you would be placed in the A's. The classmates were the ones that you saw from first grade, and you continued on through. They kept track of you, so they called it the tracking system. Yeah, we misbehaved, because sometimes you get bored, you

finished with all of your work. And I guess today they would call us the gifted and talented. We didn't know what to do, so we misbehaved. And our math teacher, instead of giving us more problems or getting onto higher math or something, he would have us write our exercises in our book, written exercise like, "I will not cry over spilt milk." And we had to write that darn thing, like a hundred times. "I will not cry over spilt milk." I got it etched in my mind. And other sayings like that. This is the math class? Geez.

So later on, when I became a teacher, I said to myself, "If the child is bored, that means that, as a teacher, I'm failing at something." You have to challenge the child, not penalize the child for misbehavior. Say, "Well, what's the problem here?" Rather than saying, "Well, I'll just give you twenty more problems of the same thing that you already know how to do. Here, you can do pages seventy-one through eighty-four." That doesn't solve anything.

JR: What was the school itself like? How big of a school was it?

MH: Well, it was the largest school. I imagine it had about a thousand, I'd say, in population, everything considered. Because it was the largest on the east side, and Kapa'a School had to accommodate the children that came down from the mountains and the rivers and the streams, and all over from the east side. They came in cars, and I used to feel sorry for them, because they had to wake up quite early in the morning. Same thing when we got to be on the high school level, like [fellow WARD] Kee Soon [Kim] said, they were in high school and they all had to do the same thing and go to Līhu'e, and there was gas rationing in those days, etc. But just getting to the school was one thing, physically.

And of course, I think the curriculum then, they did the best they could. (Many) of the teachers were, say, of the Portuguese persuasion in Kapa'a School, because of the Catholic influence in the town of Kapa'a. We were immersed in Catholicism, although we weren't Catholic ourselves. The children who were Catholics, or wanted to be Catholics, they went to catechism every week.

There were several Portuguese families that had all teachers in the family, uncles and aunts. And they all taught at this Kapa'a School, which was remarkable. So you'd be in somebody's classroom, Mr. Victorino's class, and you had Mrs. Victorino in a lower grade. Then you had aunties, Mrs. Lizama and Mrs. Rodrigues, and Joe Victorino, the brother.

The public school system, as I see it, in Kapa'a was based on loyalty. In our case, it was the principal. To this day, when I recall Mr. [George] Raymond—when you got sent to Mr. Raymond, that meant that they were going to notify your parents, right down the line, of your misbehavior. And then they expected the parents to come to school. That's how they treated a lot of the discipline problems, which I think is good. You have to go right back to the family and say to the parents, "Hey, here's Joe, your kid here, and he's not listening," and so forth and so on. And then Joe is right there in the conference, which I think is important. The child is included. So that was the discipline. They were a very strict, very disciplined school, because of the influence of the church and that father image and because it was such a closely knit faculty. You know, "I talk, you listen," that kind of a deal. And you don't answer back, and if you do, you raise your hand and all that sort of thing. Stand in line and you march in line, and if the (teacher) says, "Sit," you sit. She says, "Stand," you stand.

I remember Mr. Raymond taking us out for P.E., as we would call it in these days, but it was doing exercise, physical fitness exercises. "A fit mind in a fit body," that kind of a thing.

(Laughter)

JR: Now, you were, you mentioned, one of the, so to speak, gifted and talented.

MH: Yeah, right. We were all either the valedictorian or the salutatorian and everything. But since we weren't (perfect), we were kind of like always thinking of ways to get out of it, or get around it, or whatnot.

JR: Were you very mischievous?

MH: Yeah, I was, 'cause I was the middle child. Forget it, you just are forgotten. You gotta find ways to amuse yourself. So even to this day, I'll be thinking of alternative ways of doing a problem or whatever. Like if I'm sitting in a university class and the professor says, "This is the way it's. . . . " And you thinking, well, how else could that have been done? Or, what happened before? All kinds of others. I got into, say, a lot of discussions and maybe trouble later. You were considered a dissident in the class.

JR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MH: One that won't conform, yeah. To this day, I cherish that nonconformity.

JR: Were your siblings more conformists than you?

MH: They were real good. And for example, you see that piano there? That's a symbol of my stubbornness. We had a nice piano, and we had a piano teacher that came over and taught us. But when it was my turn---I used to listen to my sisters, they played so beautifully and played duets and stuff like that. And here is this one, you know, a nonconformist. I didn't want to learn, because everybody else was learning to play, so I would hide. And now my sisters play so beautifully. They come home and they're so tired or whatnot, the first thing they do is sit at the piano. And that kind of like eases up tension and whatnot, and it sounds so beautiful when they play. They don't need (sheet) music. And then they look at me, and they say, "Mary, you want us to teach you? Twenty-five dollars for a half hour."

(Laughter)

MH: And my mom would say, "See, you didn't practice."

There was that metronome going, and I wasn't about to go to do all that sort of thing. So to this day, our home life revolves around piano and music. I love music. For my altruism in this community, I help out at the symphony and at the opera and ballet and stuff. Saturday we have one, the light side of the symphony—pop, Hawaiian. It's called "Hawaiian Heartland." Four families will be featured. So that means, maybe, I won't get to hear it, because there will be no more chairs left. It will be standing room only.

JR: But if there were empty seats, you could sit down.

MH: Yeah, right. Like if it's something very deep and very complex, and nobody's interested, then there's lot of seats available.

JR: Whereas Hawaiian music's more popular.

MH: Yeah, the pop, the popular side, the turnout is greater, which is all right. After all, I imagine in the [Richard] Wagner days and whatnot, he was like the pop. In those days, they would go to hear him, and Chopin and stuff like that. They didn't say, "Oh, this is high-class music, classical music, so I'll go there so others can see me." They were the popular music of that era, I figure.

When I take my young friends now—and my young friends, I mean guys about your age, maybe early thirties. I think you're in your twenties.

(Laughter)

MH: And you know, I'm sort of like Aunty Mary, always a classroom teacher. We go together, and then we'd read up on the programs and then we try to figure out what we're watching on stage. And with Mary Sano and her crowd around here, I enjoy being with the younger people, shall I say, not of my age group. That's so---they don't wish to try out anything or go listen to anything (new).

JR: They're more set in their ways.

MH: Yeah, right. If it's not something they can relate to, like *My Fair Lady*, forget it.

JR: Yeah, yeah. You're more adventurous. The piano lessons, they were an after school thing?

MH: Or weekends, I imagine, Saturday, Sunday.

JR: What would you do outside of school to keep yourself occupied?

MH: Read. My parents were real good about getting us these big sets of books, (like the *My Bookhouse* set). And after you go through all the volumes—and there was volumes about different countries. And when I went back to Kaua'i and I saw some of the books at one of these raffle deals, I got several of the volumes that I remembered from my childhood. Stories from France, Paris, and stories from Japan and so forth. And here I was reading the stuff, the classics, and those guys that were half goats and half men, centaurs and stuff like that. And I was looking at the pictures, more interested in the pictures than anything else.

We had only one public library, and it was in the town of Līhu'e. We were in Kapa'a, you know, which is clear over on the other side. My mom, bless her soul, once every week, Saturday, we would all pile into the car and take all of our books, big pile of library books, and then she would drop us off in the morning and pick us up in the afternoon. And to me, that was the best thing. And of course, I read everything—trash, all kinds of stuff. *Sue Barton, Student Nurse*, then she became registered nurse—because my mom was a nurse—and then *Sue Barton, Public Health Nurse*. Like *Little House on the Prairie*, you read all the different . . .

JR: Series.

MH: Yeah, right, right. And then we got to read all the—that was my cultural center, the library. You could read anything, you know. And it was run by Caucasian ladies. And I thought it was real neat, because they used to have tea and do the kinds of things that . . .

JR: At the library?

MH: Yeah. Well, they were waiting for customers, I guess, or they'd be stamping at the desk there. For a long time, I thought, gee, I want to be a librarian too. Sip tea and stamp books and then say, "This is overdue. You owe seventy-two cents."

I used to do a lot of reading. That's why, my mom says, I wore glasses from an early age, because holding the book up to my eyes and reading when I'm not supposed to be reading, underneath the table, poor-lighted areas, etc. But when I got in with the Hale Brats [nickname for MH's WARD group], we all had the same taste. Since we were all pretty good in school, we all loved to read and we all loved to go the library. And I especially enjoyed that, because I could be with gals who had similar interests and tastes. So even to this day, when we go over, we'll exchange stuff that we've read. "Did you read about this, that?"

JR: It sounds like prior to your WARD experience you were somewhat of a loner, would that be accurate?

MH: No.

JR: No.

MH: I would say it this way, I'm not any different from anybody else. I like my private moments, but I also have my social side of me. No, if you knew me. . . . Whenever I hear somebody describing me, I always know what they're gonna [say], because they use the same words. They always say "enthusiastic," and they love to use this word, "bubbly."

JR: Bubbly.

MH: "Are you guys describing me?" I'm usually the instigator. For example, in my sorority, I'm the one that's the emcee or the chair. Like we have a birthday party coming up for our sorority, Beta chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa, and I'm the chair. I'm just getting ready for it. After you leave, then I have to work on the invitation so I can get it out on the xerox, so I can mail it this weekend. And then, we have what we call Founder's Day. And I'm advisor to the group for the entire state. So no, I wouldn't say that, the way you described me as a loner. Quite the opposite. However, after I'm all through with that social stuff and open house, then I'll revert to reading. Then I love to read. I'll get anything. And if I'm in the hotel, like I was in Kona, I'll just gather up any stuff that they have in the library there or in the lobby and just read, just like this. I want to see who put it out and who the publisher was and did they do a nice job.

JR: Well, I'm gonna have to stop to turn the tape over.

MH: Okay.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

MH: So I had a great childhood. Middle child, what do you expect?

JR: Okay, and you wanted to get into the next phase now.

MH: Right.

JR: Which is?

MH: WARD.

JR: The WARDs.

MH: Okay, since we did well in school—and then you ask how we got to join the WARD. I was thinking it over, and I figured that they asked Mrs. Rice, Flora Rice, Mrs. Philip Rice, the most distinguished member of the Kaua'i community. She was in charge of setting up the WARD, getting her instructions from Honolulu and the generals.

JR: Do you have any idea why they chose her?

MH: Yes, I do. Because, number one, she had the respect of the people of Kaua'i. And number two, her husband was a judge. Number three, she had the means. She was very well-to-do. And her family home was located right in the middle, smack-dab, of the town of Līhu'e, the county seat of the island of Kaua'i. She and her family owned that property. They called it Hale Nani, beautiful house. Acres and acres of beauty, island beauty. So all of those things.

We were super-patriotic. I gotta tell you this. I was thinking it over, Joe, and I think this common thread that runs throughout my entire life, and even now to this day, is patriotism. And it was a product of the public schools. You were asking what did the public schools teach. If they taught nothing else, it was loyalty to one's country and never questioning the federal government. We were appalled in the sixties and the seventies, when we—I don't think you remember it, 'cause you weren't born. But they had sit-ins and whatnot at the university there [i.e., University of Hawai'i], and they defied the president, sat on his desk and they threw papers all over and sprinkled sawdust, and, well, just did mischief in the office. Oh, glue and stuff like that. And they had tents on University Avenue, fronting the administration building.

JR: Bachman, yeah.

MH: Yeah, right, Bachman Hall, had sit-ins and all that. And we were appalled, because that would never have occurred to us. We were sort of like straight arrows. Patriotism was

ingrained in us. We would never do malicious damage to public property. And we would find our way of venting our thoughts through the democratic ways, through hearings and public meetings and through discussions. But you just don't go and sit on somebody's car and mark it up with soap and stuff like that. It was unheard of.

JR: Can I just---I can't resist. (Chuckles)

MH: What?

JR: You mentioned throwing the grapes at people when they're voting . . .

(Laughter)

MH: Yeah, that was early. Boy, did we get called down for that, you know.

JR: Oh, okay. But you learned your lesson.

MH: Yeah, right. Not only from the Catholics, you know. You're gonna get it from God, that kind of deal.

(Laughter)

MH: Boy, lightning is gonna strike you. And then you go to school and you hear the same thing, and then you gotta write down, "I will not cry over spilt milk; I will not throw grapes," one hundred times.

(Laughter)

MH: That was our math lesson. "Number it one, two, three, four, five." Wow, so that got ingrained.

(Laughter)

MH: Especially the Catholic. When you go to the Catholic church and you see all the statues and the blood . . .

(Laughter)

MH: God is gonna . . .

JR: The fear of God.

MH: Right. Not only that, hell and damnation. Boy, and all my teachers, the Catholic teachers, they said, "Oh, Mary." By the time I got through it, all that public education on Kaua'i, boy, was I law-abiding.

(Laughter)

MH: But still in the back of my mind, I'm still a non-conformist, but along accepted routes, shall we say. But this patriotism thing. I'm not for war. I think that there is a place for discussion before one resorts to killing one another off. And since I'm into the Unity teachings now, metaphysical and spiritual, which . . .

JR: That's the Unity Church [of Hawai'i]?

MH: Right, right. The one on Monsarrat [Avenue]. We have an affirmation: there is only one presence and one power active in the universe, and that's God the good, not God the evil. That was a counteraction of what I had been taught on Kaua'i, which is the tree of knowledge and the fruits of good and evil. So since I'm in the latter third of my life, I've kind of reversed all that I learned in my childhood. And for me now, God is a good god, and He readily forgives. (Laughs) You don't have to do anything, and he forgives you already. That's been great for me.

But being very patriotic---and I remember when we joined the WARD, my mom and dad would have sacrificed me gladly on the altar of patriotism. (The officers) came over and they said, "May we have Mary?"

(My parents) said, "Sure. We're so proud that you want her so she can serve the United States, serve our country."

JR: How did that happen exactly? Mrs. Rice came to your home?

MH: No, she didn't come to the home. She went to the school, and she spoke to the principal and the other teachers. The teachers and the physician of the community, they were in the social circle. They played cards, played bridge and whatnot. I remember seeing them play cards and whatnot in the town of Kapa'a. I know that they were conversing and they were asking, "Now, who are the smart ones in the school?" Because the ones of us who were tapped, who later became the Brats, we were all from the same tight little community of Kapa'a, and we all went to the same school. And so I think it was just this small, little area that was tapped. And we made [$]120 a month, which in those days was pretty good. There were lots of others who would have loved to have those jobs that we had, making [$]120, and here, [we were] not even dry behind the ears, so to speak.

We were laughed at by our classmates, really. They pointed fingers at us and said—you know, they figured (chuckles) that we were with the guys [i.e, servicemen] up to no good. Then we'd say, "Hey, Mrs. Rice recruited us. You want us to report you to Judge Rice?" And they would shut up.

You asked about Mrs. Rice. She was very influential, so from her social vantage point she recruited the society ladies, the Junior League of Kaua'i and the Senior League. You know how that goes, Junior League and Senior League, they were the society matrons. They were our supervisors. They didn't do the work that we did, which was plotting airplanes, but they did everything else. They kept the grounds lovely and kept a personnel roster and figured out what we had for days off and what our meals would be like. Since we were surrounded by guys, servicemen, and we loved—there was this guy Rossi. We called one another by our last names. That's how it's done in the army. "Hey, Rossi." We called this guy Rossi, and he

was one of our favorites. He used to come around and say, "Hey Brats, shut up!" You know, we'd be carrying on at night. "Shut up!"

But he was one of our favorites. And his first name, later on we found out, was Eric, E-R-I-C. And we said, "Well, we never knew it was your first name. We always called you by your last name."

He says, "Yes, I do have a first name."

We were surrounded by these (soldiers), I think, at the crucial time. When it was important to have dates, we had enough dates and we had enough fellows. So I never thought of dating or waiting for the phone to ring or all of these, "Geez, I wonder what he thinks of me?" There were always enough guys around, and we had so many all around. You woke up in the morning, and they were there passing under your window. Until late at night, there were the guards. They'd be stopping by at our little cottage. We had a little cottage which was right next to the barracks. And like I told you, I don't know why our supervisors put the youngest gals right up next to the GIs, but they did. I think it was because it was the least-favorable cottage. The best rooms were in the main house, the big house.

JR: This is Hale Nani?

MH: Right, in that estate. And tennis courts, badminton, and all that. And then, as goes out, the servants' quarters were taken up by. . . . And then ours was the fertilizer shed—no kidding—where they stacked up meal, grains, and stuff like that. They cleaned it up and they painted it. We were on the fringe, 'cause we were the youngest. And to tell you the truth, we loved being out of sight of the main house. We had things like inspection of our quarters. And when it was time for inspection, we'd just do one section and we'd lock up the rest, like the bathroom. And we'd pile all of our stuff that we didn't tidy up in the bathroom and lock the door. (Then) we'd have little notes like, "Do not lock doors during inspection time." And our homes were inspected, our quarters were inspected, not only by Mrs. Rice and her group but by the army (officers) that came around. We didn't care. You know, who needs this kind of noise?

But Mrs. Rice, we were very obedient to her and very patriotic. And what I like about the WARD base, although I didn't especially like it then, was we were taught manners. For example, Mrs. Rice took me aside and she said, "You know, Mary, when I enter the room, you stand up."

I answered back, I said, "I did stand."

She said, "No, you have to stand right away." And you stand until she sits down.

I thought that was real good. And then we had to go through introductions. "What do you say when I introduce you to the colonel?"

And you'd stick out your hand and say, "How do you do, sir?"

And later on, when I got married, my husband and I would be eating in a restaurant and one

of my girlfriends would come to the table and say, "Oh, hi Mary, hi Ed." And he doesn't stand up.

Later on, I would say, "You know, Ed, when she comes to the table, no matter what, could you please stand?"

And he says, "Oh, okay, if it makes a difference to you. I never thought of it. I thought we were in a coffee shop."

I said, "Oh, but we were taught long ago by Mrs. Rice, the gentlemen always stands and then helps (the lady) out of the booth or the chair or the car."

I remember those little things, and they have stuck with me. So to this day, "Could you get the door for me?" Or I make sure when we're walking down the street I'm walking on the inside. But especially standing, for the youngsters to learn when the teacher comes in, you stand as a sign of respect. Don't just sit around. I remember that from Mrs. Rice.

JR: When did you first meet her? Did you know her before?

MH: Yeah, we always knew of her, never personally, of course. We didn't even know that she knew we existed. Don't notice the scum.

JR: Oh, not that bad.

(Laughter)

MH: Well, we were young. Sometimes people do that with young people, with youngsters. I'm very careful at school not to do that when I'm talking with the parents, to totally ignore the child. You're talking about Johnny, and he's right there. You talk about Johnny in the third person, like he doesn't exist. So every once in a while, I'll say, "Isn't that right, John?" Or bring him into the conversation, stuff like that.

JR: When did you find out that they were interested in you?

MH: You mean the date? Well, the war broke out, and at that time, radar was the big thing. And the book *Shuffleboard Pilots* kind of brings out the fact that on this island there were mobile radar sights, and one of 'em was called ʻŌpana, on the north end, Kahuku. And they're the one that spotted the Japanese coming in that morning [December 7, 1941]. And the message was totally disregarded because they thought it was a shipment of bombers coming in from the West Coast. But here, it's coming in a different direction, you know. But it all boiled down to the fact that [Fort] Shafter was the headquarters, and they read the signals wrong. Hence, December 7 could have been avoided, you know, that slaughter and all that sort of thing. But it boils down to the fact that the detection was made by the radar, so that proves the efficiency of the radar, as it was brought in from Great Britain. The British had used it with their attacks from the Germans. So they decided, after they set up the radar system here in Oʻahu, to branch out to Kauaʻi. And it was very highly secretive. You couldn't even say the word "radar." We had little slogans like, "A slip of the lip might sink a ship," that kind of a thing.

And the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] was always on our trail. Mrs. Rice would say, "Today, we're gonna have a talk by one of the gentlemen from the FBI." It wasn't mentioned that he was FBI, but we all knew. I guess now it would be the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency].

JR: Maybe.

MH: Yeah.

JR: Yeah.

MH: We're checking up on you. Big Brother is watching, that kind of a deal. But since we were super-patriotic, we had nothing to hide. We thought it was a great service to the country, and we didn't care if we got paid or not, but we did. To serve the United States and to fight for our country and to defend it, in those days it was—you know, Pearl Harbor was a mess. Well, we lived on Kaua'i, so we didn't see the actual bombing, but we heard enough about it.

JR: Can you remember when you first heard that there was gonna be war . . .

MH: Yeah, I remember . . .

JR: . . . or there was an attack?

MH: Yeah, we remember, because my mom and dad, among other things, they had a coffee shop. They owned a coffee shop, and we all helped out in the coffee shop. And it was a Sunday, December 7, and I remember taking dishes to the sink in the back. We were listening to---his name was Webley Edwards, and he was saying that Hawai'i—the United States, as he termed it—had been attacked by Pearl Harbor. And then you'd listen to FDR [Franklin Delano Roosevelt], the president, come over the [radio], in his beautiful baritone voice, saying that we had been attacked by the Japanese—the Japs, then they called it. It was a morning, sort of similar to right now, like approaching eleven o'clock. It had been bombed at seven, eight?

JR: Eight, yeah.

MH: The announcer said that all those families who had trucks or big vehicles, if they could drive out to the airport and park them anywhere on the runway or clear field so that the Japs couldn't land. That was a civilian defense mechanism that they set up. And then, of course, Judge and Mrs. Rice were right in the middle of things, and that's how they started the first radar (stations) on Kaua'i. The first one went up in Kōke'e, which is a beautiful resort area up in the mountains. And then another one in Kīlauea, and another one in Kōloa. It was called Pu'ulani. And my friend Bob Whitaker, he hated Pu'ulani, and now he loves Kōloa and whatnot. I keep on reminding him, "Remember how you hated this place and you called it a rock?"

He said, "Yeah, I guess I did, 'cause I was younger then, I didn't know any better."

JR: He was a GI back then?

MH: Yeah, he was a sergeant. But there was the station in Kōke'e, which was a beautiful area. Kōloa wasn't all that great, but they loved Kōke'e. And Kīlauea, it's a beautiful place also. It has a lighthouse, and you can view the ocean. Those were the three radar station that were set up on Kaua'i, and the headquarters was in Līhu'e, what they call the filter center. And they needed gals to man the filter center around the clock. So we would be hooked up, sort of similar to this [microphone], you know, the headset.

JR: Headset.

MH: Right, clipped on and then plugged in. Then it would go up to the three stations up there and then to (Līhu'e). They would be reading their scope up in the mountains, and then you would receive the flashes, as they called it. There were code names. And then we plotted the progress of the aircraft or the boats and whatnot on a large table, sort of similar to this [large dining room table], with extremely good lights, 'cause we always had to blink our eyes. And right in the middle of it was a flat map of the island of Kaua'i, with the tip of O'ahu showing. You know how O'ahu sticks out. And the closest island is Moloka'i to here, but largely the island of Kaua'i. And it was on a grid, like a math grid, and marked off in squares, and on the extreme left and right were the (code) names of the grids. The names of the grids changed every so often, so if you thought—give me a word, any word.

JR: Apple.

MH: Okay. Oh, I wish they were that easy.

(Laughter)

MH: Okay, if Apple was here in the northwest corner, maybe next week Apple would be in the southeast corner. But they had hard names, like McCorriston and other names like that.

JR: So they can't break the code.

MH: Yeah, right. And then you would get the flashes from the gentlemen that manned the radar station. Our code name was Rascal.

JR: Rascal.

MH: Which I thought was kind of cute. But I remember one of the older women, she was saying into this headset, "I'm not a rascal!"

(Laughter)

MH: And then, the guy at the other end was called Oscar, O-S-C-A-R. And every fifteen minutes, we would have to make a line check. You would say, "Oscar, this is Rascal. I'm making a line check."

And he says, "I hear you loud and clear. Five," at five or whatever it was. We have to look at the big clock, like I am looking at it right now, and every fifteen-minute segment would be in a different color. Like the first fifteen minutes in red, and then green (and) blue. As you

plotted the progress of the airplane, after fifteen minutes, you would remove the old . . .

JR: Color.

MH: Right, because you were on your second fifteen. So that the (officers)—there was a platform all around the room where the officers would be standing—they would know the progress of the airplane, and they'd be able to identify them as friendly or unfriendly. Those of us, the lowest of the low, we would be plotting the airplanes, we would be listening to the guys on our sets. And this goes on twenty-four hours, so sometimes we're on the midnight shift, or graveyard, as we called it. You know, like two A.M. or three A.M. The guys would be singing to us, you know. (Chuckles) And then the officers (would say), "Hey, cut it out!" So you have to not give away with your facial expression that you're talking with the guys.

But after a while, small talk enters in. They (would) say, "Well, I'm going to be in Līhu'e. How about going to a movie?" Or they'd say, "What do you look like?"

And we say, "What do you look like?"

And in the meantime, all these officers, "Are you conversing?" And they'd be able to tap in, you know. "Are you guys talking non-army stuff?"

We say, "Who us? Two A.M. in the morning? Heck no." But I remember conversing with the guys. It was a lot of fun, yeah. And always, "Where are you from?"

And they say, "I'm from Brooklyn," or, "I'm from Irvine, California." And I thought it was fascinating to look it up on the map. Or from the South. I thought it was fascinating, guys from North Carolina with their accents. I thought it was marvelous the way that they spoke. And they were so nice to us, although we were different color and different races. We got along swell. I always admired that for the gentlemen that we were working with every day.

We worked with Indians. I thought it was remarkable. Louis Bissonetti, I'll always remember him. And he said, "You know, I'm Indian."

And I said, "Wow, what tribe?" you know, Cheyenne or whatever. First Indians that we had ever met. I said, "Gee, you don't look like an Indian. Maybe your nose and your dark skin."

Then you'd come to the White supremacists, as we called them. But then, we were kind of accustomed to that. If you don't want to associate with us, it's okay, you don't have to. But they'd come around, sooner or later. Well, at first they would look at us, wondering, oh gee, I wonder whether she speaks English or not? And you sense it. But since there were six or seven of us, the Hale Brats, we didn't care whether they. . . . Because that's only natural, to wonder whether a person is able to converse in English or can even write in English or stuff like that. But after all, this is the early years of the war. And we didn't have the Civil Rights Act of the sixties [1964]. All these Southern boys, the rednecks and whatnot, I guess they figured, geez, everybody can use the same bathrooms and eat together? You see, you kind of sensed it. Because after all, we were versed in American history and knew about the Civil War, which is still being fought to this day. But now, in my travels, I find the most hospitable people are the gals from the South, especially my sorority, which is a Southern

sorority. It's based in Kansas City, but the nicest gals come from the South. We had a convention in Tennessee, and after being with them, you'd talk like they do. "Ten-nuh-see, Ten-nuh-see, Mary." I love the way they call my name, "Ma-ree." And if it's a presiding officer, she never gets impatient. She says, "I'll wait until y'all are ready."

But the best one was when our grand officer says, "All those in favor, say aye." And she would say, "All those in favor, say ah."

And so we'd all say, "Ah."

(Laughter)

MH: Instead of aye, ah. And so we thought that was neat, these guys coming from all over (the U.S.).

JR: Yeah.

MH: And seeing our faces, and we were seeing their faces for the first time. But we got to be very friendly with one another because we had such super supervisors. Every month or so they'd have dances or we'd have little parties. We have a chance to meet the officers and the men, as they were called. And there was a distinction. You know, officer country and the men, you don't mingle. That was it.

JR: Tell me a little bit about the . . .

MH: That's it. I had to tell you about patriotism because that was so important. . . .

JR: I wanted to . . .

MH: I'm almost finished with my notes. I don't have anything else!

JR: No, no, no, no, no. I have lots more, unfortunately. You want to take a break?

MH: Yeah, could we? A stretch.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

JR: First of all, I wanted to find out exactly how old you were when you first started with the WARD.

MH: Fifteen.

JR: Fifteen. And you were one of the younger ones, yeah?

MH: The youngest.

JR: You were the youngest?

MH: Right.

JR: Did you know what they wanted you to do when you were first approached?

MH: Right, right.

JR: You were familiar with the idea of the radar and that at that time?

MH: We had to go through training. The first thing that we had to do was to be able to tell time the army way. Like right now, it's eleven-hundred. You'd tell time in four digits.

JR: There was a training session . . .

MH: Right.

JR: . . . or something like that? How long did the training take?

MH: I would say about, oh, several months.

JR: Oh, it did?

MH: And I don't know why I was chosen, because I was doing it all wrong. Math was never a great (subject), although I think I'm a pretty good mathematician. But I remember the plotting, as it was called.

JR: Did they have you do like mock . . .

MH: And it come to us over the headset.

JR: Did you know . . .

MH: You'd hear the gentlemen's voices coming over, and then you'd have to do whatever they ask you to. And every once in a while, as we went on in the war years, we would have refresher courses and tests to test our accuracy of our plotting, etc. And then we got onto other jobs, like what they call filtering and recording and stuff like that.

JR: Maybe you could explain those different jobs. Filtering, what is that?

MH: Well, that book *Shuffleboard Pilots*, they went in to some detail about it. For example, when the radar men at the different stations would call in their findings, then you would be plotting their findings on the big board. And of course, it would be in a haphazard manner, and then you'd have to make some sense of it. Figure the direction that the plane was going, and how fast it was going, and so forth and so on. Identify it as friendly or unfriendly. And you had to do it real fast like, with the help of the officers. They would filter all of this extraneous stuff that didn't matter and plot out the true path of the aircraft. Or whether you were getting a feedback or stuff like that. So filtering meant making some sense out of the readings that you got. The ultimate objective was to protect the Hawaiian Islands from another Pearl Harbor secret attack through the means of radar. And radar was the state-of-the-arts thing then.

JR: Did you know any of your fellow WARDs before?

MH: Right, especially the Brats, 'cause we all went to the same school?

JR: Oh, so you knew . . .

MH: Yeah, like I told you, they tapped the principal and the doctor and whatnot and asked for names. So the names that were given were the names of the people at our school who were non-Japanese and pretty good in school.

JR: Was there an oath or something that you had to take, that you wouldn't tell other people about what you were doing?

MH: We had to take the oath of office, I guess, by holding up your right hand, like you were going into the army. And besides that, you had lots of these orientation sessions about keeping your mouth shut and not saying what was happening.

JR: Could you tell your sisters . . .

MH: No, we told nobody.

JR: . . . or your parents?

MH: No, they didn't know. They had to trust Mrs. Rice implicitly, which they did.

JR: What did your parents think that you were joining up for?

MH: Well, like being in the army and doing clerical work. Clerical, 'cause that's what women did in those days, lots of clerical work. Either you were a teacher or a nurse, for a young person.

JR: And you had to move away from home, too.

MH: Oh, right, right. We moved away to live. We lived in Līhu'e. We had to pull four shifts. The four shifts went around the clock, so sometimes you got the day shift like this, eleven A.M., sometimes you got the afternoon shift, or the swing shift or the graveyard shift. It was very difficult getting up for the midnight ones or the early morning shift. But we laugh about it today. Harriet [Lum], for example, the one who occupied the bunk next to me, before she went to sleep she would take a shower and everything, then she would dress half of herself. She would have her underthings on—her bra and her panty and so forth, and her hose, etc.—so that she could sleep in a little later. We'd say, "Harriet, it's time to get up."

She'd say, "I'm half dressed." And she was really half dressed, in bed lying there. (Chuckles)

To this day, I still remember her. She said, "All I gotta do is climb out of bed and comb my hair and that's it."

I think being in the company of compatible gals, it made an adventure of it. And patriotism entered into the picture, but after that, then it was more an adventure, our entertaining one

another and then having all the fellows. Such attentiveness to us spoiled us. We were sort of like—well, we were their little sisters and they were our big brothers. At least that's what was my attitude toward them. I don't know about the others [i.e., the older WARD members], whether they had—I imagine they had romantic interests, whatnot. But for the Brats, most of us, we were just concerned about our homework. And the fellows helped us with our homework a great deal, which Annie likes to point out. But I did all of my own homework, and she had the guys doing her homework. But I think it was marvelous that we had ready dates. And you could have a date in the morning, Joe, or you could have one in the afternoon, or you could have one in the evening, all depends on your shift. You could have a guy go for walks in the morning and have breakfast or one for sandwiches at lunch. You could have three dates or four dates (a day). Wasn't that real neat? But we'd wait for Rossi to ask. Then he would have to take all six of us. He says, "Hey, aren't I going out on an individual date?"

"No, you gotta take all of us." We'd all cluster around him. And he was a sergeant, so that meant maybe he could get a vehicle so all of us could climb aboard. And the higher rank they were, then they had things like jeeps, which we thought was real great.

JR: Did you get to know one guy, then he would get shipped off?

MH: Yeah, right, right. And living with us was a little older person called Chinny, C-H-I-N-N-Y, Chin Soon Chun really. And she was sort of like our mess sergeant, and so she took care of our eating, you might say, for the WARD, working in the conjunction with the regular Army mess sergeant. And because of that, we pulled KP all the time, kitchen police. And not only that, but we always were in the kitchen cooking with her, or she made it a point for us to wash the dishes or rinse out thermoses for coffee. We were always in the kitchen, so we got to know the fellows real well. We'd bake cakes or pies for them, and they thought that was real great. And they'd always be around us, chopping and slicing. That was the vehicle—food and food preparation—that got us to know all of the men in the company in a manner that was super. You just can't sit around and look at each other and say, "Hi there, babe, where you from?"

(Laughter)

MH: "How many dogs you got?" And after a while, that's old hat. But if you gotta prepare three meals a day—and with Chinny saying, "C'mon, c'mon, c'mon. Clean up, let's clean up," all the time, clean up. Or we'd have to do vegetable preparation, potatoes and carrots and scraping and stuff like that. So all of the Brats are good cooks except me, because Chinny taught us well. They bake wonderful cakes and pies.

You say that we miss the guys when they get transferred, yeah we do. You know, you get so accustomed to one guy, and then he says, "I'm shipping out." Then we'd have a party for him. That's what brought this to mind.

JR: Yeah.

MH: Like Lieutenant Cross. And we'd have it in my home, or we'd have it on base, or we'd have beach parties and stuff like that.

JR: Your parents would host things that . . .

MH: Oh yeah, they loved to meet the people that we worked with. "Bring 'em over."

And since we had a big home there—especially Rossi, he just loved to go over to the house. We had a big yard, you know, rolling acres, and we could play volleyball or badminton. And he was good with us. We'd say, "Play with us."

And the other guys may say, "Oh, I don't want to play with you Brats."

Rossi was so good, he'd say, "Okay."

And then we'd spread blankets on the lawn, and then we'd lie on the blankets and talk.

JR: Did you ever hear later that so-and-so was missing in action or something like that?

MH: None of the fellows died, but they went onto Saipan and Iwo Jima and those places like that. Then, of course, they couldn't write about what was happening, 'cause it got censored. You get a letter with a lot of holes in it.

(Laughter)

MH: No kidding. But you knew that they were in—like Lieutenant Cross, he said he didn't really appreciate Hawai'i and being at Kōke'e until he got stuck in Kwajalein.

JR: Now, you mentioned before that your group of WARDs had a common—what'd you say it was, the fertilizer barn or something like that?

MH: Shed, the cottage.

JR: Yeah, yeah. And then you've mentioned cots. How was it exactly set up?

MH: Oh, there were army cots, and there were, say, seven of us in the cottage. The cottage was one big room with the bathroom adjoining it and closets along one wall. Sort of like a regular barracks, and just the cots spread out like. But to me, it was always like camping. You know, we did a lot of camping on Kaua'i. It was a lot of that and a lot of sharing. And since I come from a big family, you shared a lot, communal living. And we did a lot of work in the kitchen, food preparation.

JR: Was that the total number of WARDs for Kaua'i, or were there other quarters?

MH: Oh yeah, there were others. We were the lowest of the low.

JR: Why were you the lowest of the low?

MH: We were the youngest, and we didn't really care for the luxury that the others had. They had nice bedrooms, etc. So that's why, when it came time for inspection, we locked ours. We got the lousiest room, who cares?

JR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MH: But we didn't mind it. I guess being young too, and it was just like camping out, going out for the weekend at the camp, along the beach or something like that. I always thought of it that way as I would be making up the blankets and stuff. Well, I belonged to the Y, you know, the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association], the Girl Reserves and all that. I've always been one that belonged to something. Like now, I belong to Alpha Delta Kappa. I've always been with a whole bunch of people. It's always been, "Let's share. You've got toothpaste there, I need more." And coming from a family of five, I was always sharing, and being the middle child, you want to say, "Okay, here. Take this, take that."

JR: Did you associate much then with the others, the people that weren't in your group?

MH: The different shifts. We had four shifts, so we were shift two. There was always one shift on duty, the one you don't get to see. But you got to see the other three shifts. But usually when we got off shift, we were so tired and sleepy. If you get off at seven A.M. or six A.M., after being up all night, then you'd sleep a great deal. And then, a lot of time was spent doing laundry. We had uniforms. Uniforms had to be washed and starched. And in those days, you had to really iron stuff. And then, since we were naughty, we had extra tasks, like raking. We had to do chores. And a lot of time was spent in the kitchen, wiping tables, long tables like this. But we got to know all of the guys. And after we'd clean up the mess hall and stuff like that, then we'd all sit down with the fellows, and then we'd be drinking coffees or doughnuts and stuff, and eating leftovers.

It was always like camping. I always had the feeling that I'm in a wonderful camp, and these are all my camp mates. And a lot of guys. All the times fellows would be walking into the mess hall, because that was like their social hall. There was a piano in there, and sometimes there'd be dancing, and lot of time we'd be singing. We'd be singing all the World War II songs, love to sing. To me, they were always my big brothers. They'd come around and say, "How are you doing in your homework?" Or they'd look through the books that I'm carrying. And then our library was right outside Mrs. Rice's beautiful home. The public library. We're in the Līhu'e now. And geez, we could spend all that time in the library, so we did. We spent a lot of time there.

JR: Oh yeah, you must have liked that.

MH: Yeah, I did. And I got to read all the magazines and newspapers. And especially the magazines, 'cause we didn't subscribe to magazines in those days. But we had a lot of things, like *Playmate*—not like *Playgirl*, *Playboy* now—a lot of juvenile magazines.

JR: It's like a kid's magazine.

MH: Right, right, right.

JR: Adolescents, yeah.

MH: And they had crossword puzzles and stuff like that. When the magazine got old, the librarian said you can write in the answers. In the clouds, they'd say, "Find six appliances," or

something like that.

JR: Yeah, yeah.

MH: And you had to really look at it, turn it around. I love to do that. Shade it in, or complete this, stuff like that. I thought that was great fun. So I didn't miss my family at all, I'm sorry to say.

(Laughter)

MH: And I don't think the other Brats did too, 'cause we had a chance to go home once a week. But I tell you, I did enjoy the guys. And then later on, as they visited us with their families, and we got older through the years—as I say, through the decades. We'd always look back, and we'd say, "Oh, remember when. . . . " All of these guys, like from the fifties, and those were our college years. And then the sixties, raising families. And then the seventies and then the eighties, and then now the nineties. Now we call each other on the phone, "Are you still alive?"

And so you have your favorites that you kind of like have kept in touch with all these many years. And we have lot of reunions. "Somebody's gonna be in town, let's all get together." People say, at Ala Wai School, where I teach, they always say, "Gee, Kaua'i people, they're always meeting, aren't they?" They'd say, "Hey, the kids that I went to school with, forget it. We don't associate." And they don't even go to high school reunions.

Whereas I really never had any high school on Kaua'i, we have lot of reunions, a lot of luncheons. We'll say, "Leonard Mondi and his wife are in town. Let's get together." And then all of us would get together for Leonard and his wife.

And then Leonard would say, "These are the people that I worked with when I was stationed here in Hawai'i. I was just a sergeant," or plain GI or something like that. And then the gals have their photo albums, and they'd bring 'em out and reminisce and stuff like that. We went through all of this for December 7 [i.e., the fiftieth anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack].

JR: Yeah.

MH: I was the, I guess, coordinator for Kaua'i, operating from here, Honolulu. Sent out all of these little brochures, notes, messages, to join the O'ahu gals. Their headquarters was [Fort] Shafter. And the code name for the filter center was Lizard. And so we had a chance to visit Lizard, and we had luncheons and dinners and got invited out to different places, etc. That was another reunion. And then *Shuffleboard Pilots* was the end result for the O'ahu gals, the ones who wrote, the writers. I thought they did a very good job of putting together a book. What I like mostly about it, Joe, is the fact that the women figured prominently. I don't think we focus enough on the contributions of women in the community. All the time it's the men. And this situation where a fellow and a gal can be working in the same office, doing the same kind of work, and the male gets paid more. That's the way it was in teaching. If you were a family man and you had a family, you got paid more as a male teacher because you had a family to raise.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 22-30-1-92; SIDE ONE

JR: One thing we haven't talked about yet is how you continued your education while you were WARD.

MH: Okay. I guess it was important that we all do this education bit, because my mom and dad were so deeply immersed in [the notion that] the only way you gonna get ahead in life is through education. And that's why they came over to the United States, for a better life. Their ultimate objective was a better life. And I think all of us in contemporary Hawai'i that have immigrant parents, [they] thought that a better life [was possible] through moving to the United States and through education. So it was important that you go to school and minded the teacher and go to church on Sundays.

JR: Do you have any idea what they wanted you to be?

MH: Whatever we wanted to be, but go to school. Do not be a dropout. So none of us were dropouts, everybody went to school. And in those days, either you became a teacher or a nurse. There were very few professions that were open to females. Really, even to this day. I'm happy to see---when I counsel young people, they say, "Well, we're not the office type."

I say, "Well, let's go drive trucks, or be a plumber"—plumbers make a lot of money—"or an electrician. You know, you don't have to stay in the same kind of woman jobs."

I'm happy to see when we have a bricklayer, masons—females in professions that are not considered female kind of positions. I like to see women in banking, in the upper echelon. Like in business, etc., to be a director or president or CEO [chief executive officer]. Doesn't have to be a male. Why do we always have to have the males up where they can screw things up? And I think the women in government do much better, like Patsy Mink and Pat Saiki. And I'd like to see a woman governor, a woman mayor. I think it's tremendous that we have so many women mayors. You know, the one on Kaua'i, Joanne [Yukimura], and the one on the Big Island [Lorraine Inouye].

JR: And Maui too [Linda Lingle].

MH: And Maui too, right. Three female mayors. I think women, we have to make ourselves known, and we have to get away from just being in the home. And being dependent on males. Like I told you, when I was trying to sell my husband's boat and I just ran into this macho business of the males, where they figured I didn't know anything about boats. And Ed has been dead since '88, so it's been four years. And all this time, I've been trying to sell his thirty-two footer—his mistress, the apple of his eye. He used to just love to just lie and look at the stars and sail all around. I used to talk to his picture at night and say, "Geez, I'm having such a hard time selling the boat." Mainly because, I guess, they want to get the boat at a good price and I'm not willing to let it go at such a give-away price. And who had to finally help me but Brian.

JR: Yeah, a man.

MH: Yeah. (Laughs) From the Coast Guard. And just saying that, "Hey, here's my family member. He's Brian, and he's a lieutenant in the Coast Guard."

And then Brian would say, "Well, we have a pretty good boat here," and all that. And then the tide turned, you could just sense it.

JR: Yeah, yeah.

MH: Even at the table where we would be discussing, talking like this, at the yacht club. If you weren't around, they would tell me, "Hey, you gotta take the boat out of the water. It's time for fixing the hull and scraping and painting and all that." I was all set to do that, Joe. And you have to pay through the nose to get the guys to help you out. Once the boat is taken out of the water, all hands have to be there to scrape the barnacles. If it sits out of the water, the barnacle can set and you have to chisel them off the boat. Then they would tell me, "Oh, there's a leak in the oil line," lovely things like that, or worms in the hull, stuff like that, generally talked down.

JR: Yeah.

MH: Like repair people, when they come up to the house and talk about termites and plumbing and stuff like that. I had the home renovated, they talk down to the females. Or about cars, especially when you say, "I hear a chirping sound."

And they say, "Well, what does it sound like?"

And you go, "Chirp, chirp, chirp."

And you can just see the disdain in their eyes, like, "Oh, what's she doing? Women, they don't know anything."

But going back to Ed's boat—I married a wonderful husband, I really married a great guy who had a lot of respect for the females and for women and their ability, which I thought was just tremendous. He was ahead of his time. So when I had difficulty selling the boat, I said, "Geez Ed, they're not listening to me." Really, I can tell when they're not listening, that glazed expression in their eyes. And then Brian had to bail me out. But by this time I was happy to get help from any source, 'cause the year was coming to an end, 1991—I just sold it—and income taxes on the boat and insurance, and I was going to lose the slip, and all that sort of thing.

JR: It worked out, though.

MH: Yeah. I prayed, I prayed a lot. And Brian came to my help—male. (Laughs)

JR: I was asking you about the school. It was important that you continued your education . . .

MH: Right.

JR: . . . but how did you do that when you were living in Līhu'e and working nights and doing all those kinds of things?

MH: Mrs. Rice was so wonderful, she got a tutor for us. And the tutor tutored all of us. And the tutor tutored us all shifts, different hours. And Hale Brats, we were pretty good. We reported for our classroom time, and we read our assignments, and we did our jobs. Whereas some of the others, I think they got interested in guys, boyfriends. They had boyfriends. But we didn't have boyfriends, so to speak. None that you got so hung up that you forget to read. I remember we'd go to the library, and we'd read, we'd do our assignments. And it was subjects that could be taught through a tutor, like history, geography, civics, and that sort of thing. Especially history, American history and world history, where it was just plain reading and then you'd regurgitate back to the instructor what you had learned. And then, English. He'd assign topics to us, and then we would write. And writing was never a bugaboo for me. I enjoyed writing. The only thing I cannot do is compose poetry.

JR: Do you think that you were helped or hindered by this tutoring experience?

MH: Helped.

JR: You were.

MH: Right. Because you got to really converse with the instructor, like we're doing right now. And he wasn't there in the front of the [classroom]. You know Catholic schools, like forty of us, and you're way in the back. Especially if you do well, you go sit in the back. And the ones that don't do well are up front with the teacher. But here we got to converse with Mr. John Crosson, C-R-O-S-S-O-N. He later became a principal. But he was so marvelous to speak with. And after you read something, then he would give his interpretation. And that was the first time that I got to talk with, say, an educator or discuss things. "Hey, how about this?" And for the first time I got to talk about what was not in the books. Or to look at who wrote the book, to get his slant and not say just because you read it in the book, it's the gospel. I began to question, largely through having an individual tutor like Mr. Crosson. He would say, "Who wrote the book?" Then you have to look at it from his standpoint, the author's standpoint. It never occurred to me to look to see. And where it came from. Get a slant on it. For the first time I began to look at other things in the book, especially the author. He would ask me, "Who's the author and what's his background?"

JR: Yeah, which is important.

MH: Which is important.

JR: Yeah.

MH: "Where's he coming from?"

I'd say, "I don't know."

(Laughter)

MH: He said, "Find out."

"I just read it because it's fun, it's entertaining." I got beyond that stage.

"Oh, why did you read the book?"

"It was fun." Just the stock kind of phrases that the youngsters give to me in school. "I liked it."

You know, "What did you do?"

"I went to the zoo, and we fed the pigeons. I liked it." Always, "I liked it." And, "It was fun."

JR: Being younger than most of the other people, did . . .

MH: And short. I was the shortest.

JR: But did that accelerate your learning so that you were actually learning, maybe, higher than you would have?

MH: No. You know the kind of talk, barracks talk, that you'd converse with the other gals, hey, I was able to hold my own in conversation a long time. I didn't need their—but I enjoy talking with the men. The women not so much, 'cause they didn't have much to contribute. It's like, "I go home, I wash the clothes, and I come back here and hang it up." That kind of thing.

But if you talk with the male, then—like I told you, "Where you come from?"

And they'd say, "Texas."

And then we'd say, "The capital of Texas is what?" And then they'd talk about the wars of Texas, the Mexican wars, and how close it was to the Mexican border. And I'd say, "Oh wow, I didn't know it was that close to the Mexican border."

And then we'd talk about the food, since we were always in the cafeteria, or mess hall in those days, preparing stuff. And they said, "Yeah, Mexican beans."

And then you'd get to eat all of the stuff that the guys knew about, burritos and stuff like that. And we never saw hominy before, grits. We say, "You eat that stuff? How do you eat it?" Then they teach us how to eat. Especially hominy grits, which I didn't care for. I still don't, but I got to taste it. The fellows from Texas, they'd sing their songs. And I loved country-western music from those days.

I could learn a lot from my association with the males. Even with Bob [Whitaker], for example. He's such a good example. From the Hoosier State, he comes from Indiana. And he comes from that little town, Lafayette. He said, "You heard of Purdue [University], didn't you?"

And I didn't know Purdue. "What's that?"

He tell me, "Oh, it's an engineering school. It's very well known."

And I said, "Oh well, I heard of Indianapolis."

He said, "No, you have to come on a little airplane that flies into Lafayette." And then (years) later, when I visited the campus and I saw Lafayette and John Purdue and his statue and so forth, then (I) could link up all the things that I had heard about in the past. I got to hear all about Hoosier country, that they're called Hoosiers. And we got to sing songs like "Back Home [Again] in Indiana" and "[On] the Banks of the Wabash [Far Away]."

"Wow," I said, "that's a river?" There's the White River, the Wabash, and all that sort of thing. See, you get to know the rivers. I got to know my geography pretty well. The Appalachians and the Rockies—I love mountains, and I still do. For me, mountains are very spiritual, and so I love to be surrounded by the mountains. I don't care for man-made stuff, but I love the mountains, that which God has created.

I get together with Bob. He's the one that writes to me twice a year—or has been all these years—on my birthday and Christmas. All these years, imagine, how about that?

JR: Yeah.

MH: We kind of relish our friendship which has withstood the test of time. Sounds so cliche-ish, but it's really the truth. And I appreciate all of the deep friendships that I have made. As I look at his pictures now—of course, he's old and whatnot—but to me, he's always twenty. That was what he was when I first met him, twenty, twenty-one. I appreciate friendships and the love that comes from friendship. Not the romantic love, but hey, a great deal of appreciation. And he said that he learned a lot about (other) cultures too. For the first time he met somebody who was non-White, yeah.

JR: It worked both ways.

MH: Right, it worked both ways. He said, "We didn't know whether you gals could speak English or whatnot."

So I said, "Well, I guess I would have the same thoughts if I went down to the Fiji Islands and Tonga." You know, you wonder whether these Fijians could speak English or not. I try to put myself in their shoes.

One thing which we couldn't get accustomed to, the fellows used to get drunk, used to get high. I don't know what they were drinking—alcohol, beer. And since we were right in the middle of the army camp, then we used to see them going to the PX [post exchange] to drink their beer, and then going over to the latrines for the bathrooms and whatnot. And afterwards they'd come over and sing to us, "Ahhhieee, Mary!" And so that's what we saw, all these drunks.

JR: Opened your eyes.

MH: Yeah, wow. And then later on the next day, they'd apologize. "What did I say when I came around? You know, you gotta forgive us, because we were homesick. We're tired and sick of the war. We want to go back home. We miss our wives," or parents or whatnot.

JR: Was there ever any trouble at Hale Nani? I mean, with military guys getting too fresh or anything like that.

MH: No, remarkably. As Florence Richardson summarized it so well in *Shuffleboard Pilots*, she thought it was because we had a very good setup with the superiors, our superior ladies, Mrs. Rice and her crew. They put together enough parties and social events where we got to meet all of these fellows on a nice level, and then later on there was individual dating. But there was enough setups, like dances and dinners, that we got to meet the fellows before they got drunk. But as Florence pointed out, it was just like one big family living together. Unlike O'ahu, we were thrown together so much of the time because of the proximity, physical proximity. Like we would see the fellows first thing in the morning and last thing at night, and they would see us too, same thing. You got to accept that you look out the window and see khaki. It's a sea of khaki all over. So after a while you just accept that. You figure it must be happening to everybody else. But it wasn't happening to everybody else. 'Cause later on, if we happen to go out in individual dates to the movie theater or something, then you would feel, "Oh, I guess we are odd," you know, that we're dealing with GIs and fellows in uniforms so much of the time.

JR: Did you have girlfriends from before, like when you were going to Kapa'a School, and they would see you then later when you were a WARD and so forth?

MH: Yeah, even to this day, and they still talk about it. And they fall into two categories, one were the Japanese, and they wondered why we were put in (Hale Nani) and given employment and they weren't. And then the others were non-Japanese who wondered why they weren't tapped for work in the WARD. "How come we weren't chosen and you were chosen?"

We said, "Because we had good grades." But they had good grades too, so I figure that the reason we were tapped was just luck of the draw. I guess when Mrs. Rice happened to be talking to a certain segment of her bridge players, they mentioned maybe six names and that was it. If they thought about it, they would have mentioned six other names. But they just mentioned six names that they knew, and I guess they went on to play another hand or something. It was just the luck of the draw. It was just happenstance.

But in Unity [Church], I've learned to believe that nothing really happens by accident, that there is purpose. And we have free will, we have choice. Joe, you can make a choice, whatever you're doing right now. You can close the interview or whatnot, or you can go on with it, whatever. You have your choice. But imagine, within the choice itself is this sense of knowing what the outcome would be, just in that area of choice. I guess that's why I enjoy reading about philosophy and whatnot, because it goes beyond reason. After a while you surpass reason and intellect. It goes something beyond what our minds can fathom. And then, as you meditate and you get into the upper realm, then you get revelations or you have enlightenment, what Buddha experienced and others, which I think is marvelous. I'm into that now, about using my brains for something other than just two plus two equals four. There's

something else, our purpose in life and all that sort of thing. You do that when a beloved one dies, like my husband did. And all of a sudden, you're alone, so to speak, alone.

JR: Yeah, you're adrift.

MH: Adrift. And you gotta hang on to something to get you out of bed in the morning. Why? That big thing, why. That's where I'm at now, the third phase, the why. So as I think about what you're doing with me right now, you're asking for specifics. You know, we can do specifics, like one, two, three, what I did during the years, and so forth. And then the big question, why? And what do we do from here, or what lesson did I learn? And always there is a lesson to be learned from our experiences, Joe.

In everything, I have tried to use the word "perfect." Like if you lost your job today, then you're supposed to say, "Perfect." Hard to believe. Or you have a flat when you get out of the driveway, you're supposed to say, "Perfect." Because there's a lesson to be learned by that flat, or your loss of a job, or. . . . Like I have a pimple here right now. I said, "My god!" I have some parties that I'm going to do next week. And you want to look your best, and darn, a pimple. But if you gonna object to it strenuously, then the pimple will flare up more and whatnot. So you say, "Okay. All right, I'll accept it." And you say, "What lesson is to be learned from this?" Maybe I have to drink more water or lay off the sweets or something like that. But something other than the obvious. Everything that I do---like what we are talking about, the WARD days and whatnot, I said, "It was part of my life, my experience, for what we call my unfolding," the ultimate unfoldment. Because we don't really die when we close our eyes, we go on to another life. And then, you don't start out fresh. Like my next life, I won't start out fresh spiritually, like being a baby and going through all the different phases. You start out by being as complex as when you left this life. Like you're a pretty complex person.

JR: It just keeps building on itself.

MH: Yeah, to the ultimate. And the ultimate is what? I don't know.

JR: And this is what they talk about when you go to the Unity Church?

MH: Right. When you get beyond all the songs and stuff like that, do good and all that sort of thing, then you ask, "There must be a purpose to this." As the expression goes, "There must be a pony in here." You know, the pony?

JR: I've never heard of that expression.

MH: Really? Well, when there's that shit lying around there . . .

JR: Oh.

(Laughter)

MH: . . . you gotta see something. With all this shit lying around, there must be a pony somewhere. You can either see that, or you can see the pony.

JR: Yeah, yeah. It's how you frame it.

MH: Yeah, right. Exactly.

JR: Well, I know that from talking to you the last time, you mentioned that the war experience is one thing that had broadened your horizon, I think is the way you put it.

MH: Right.

JR: You know, it seems to me that now that since you're on your own, there's been more . . .

MH: Yeah, I think you have to go that direction, at least I do. Like, for example, the gals will say, "Oh, for two years, I didn't go to school"—speaking about our WARD years—"and so I'm always behind in my classes," which is what I first entertained, that notion. And then I said to myself, hey, there's a lesson to be learned. I was put into the WARDs and I gained experiences that far outweighed stuff that can be learned in a regular classroom. I think that, again, you have to use the word "perfect." You know, "Perfect." I was called into the WARD, perfect! I didn't graduate with my class, perfect! Who cares? You care. It doesn't matter whom [else] you please.

So I always look at (my) WARD experiences from that viewpoint. And even when we were in the WARDs and we were saying to—you know, like I told you, we would lie at nights on our cots. The lights would be out, and we would be talking among ourselves. And we would say, "Hey, what are we gonna do after this? We can't be plotting airplanes all the time." And that was pretty heady stuff for teenagers, first time out of the house and stuff like that. "What do you want do when you get out?" And, "What are you gonna do and how are you gonna do it? We don't have any money and no education, so to speak."

We would say, "Well, we could marry somebody," and we'd think of all kinds of things. And, "Why do you think we are in the WARD?"

And so, I think the youngest group, we thought about more about philosophically looking at that situation than, I think, the older women that would just come in, put six hours, and then go back home, fix dinner for their families. Because we lived on base twenty-four hours. So even now, when I see Kee Soon and the rest of 'em, they say, "Hey, this is what we finally ended up doing. Is this what we really wanted? Is this what you want out of life? You always said you wanted to travel," we'd say to the others, "well, you got to travel. You always wanted to meet other guys, and you got to meet other fellows."

I look on the WARD experience like I do any other experience in my life, as a terrific adventure, and there's a lesson to be learned from it, and to say, "Perfect," and to look for that pony, 'cause there's a pony in there somewhere. It's not all that cruddy stuff. Same thing for life right now. I'm happy (about) my home. I got two acres. To live for the present, savor the moment, which is my philosophy. Like I enjoy talking with you. And I think you look very nice in your shirt with the paisley print.

JR: (Laughs) Thank you very much.

MH: And your jeans and your socks that match, and your hair. And you remind me a whole lot of the Rossi that we knew way back when, Eric. He was such a nice guy, really. Hey, we had lovely adventures with some wonderful men that we still keep in touch with.

JR: Yeah, yeah, I'm amazed at that, actually.

MH: I think friendship, and the love that comes from one's fellow men, and to do good in the community, is what I'm concerned about now, as well as my family. Like I do a lot of altruism. Saturday, I help out at the symphony again. And we do things like, I told you, cleaning Ronald McDonald House, and a lot of school groups, taking the kids out to different field trips, to the neighbor islands, that kind of a deal. Helping out with the math contest we always have. And we put out the money for prizes, spelling bees. Mostly we like to concentrate on the intermediate school level and the secondary. The elementary kind of takes care of itself. But it's the secondary level that we're concerned about, the youth, 'cause they don't have that direction. When they don't have a direction, then they get high on drugs or do other things like that for gratification of some sort. If we get to talk with the children and support them in—especially the math quizzes that we have. We have math bowls among the different intermediate schools, and then we put up the prizes, etc. And then for the secondary schools, we help on career days kind of a deal. "What do you want to do when you get out?" Same thing that I was thinking about when I was in the WARD. But there was nobody to help us then, except the guys came around and [we] said, "Eh, what are you doing?"

And they said, "We don't know. We're just as lost as you are. You know, we got tapped into the service." Then they all went back to school too, under the GI bill.

JR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MH: Which was tremendous. We all went back to school together. I guess education was the key.

JR: Did you feel like you were in the military when you were a . . .

MH: Yeah, very much so. We had to tell time by the military, and we had to stay clean and sanitary and be ready for inspection, not only in our private lives but in our profession, I guess. We had to be up on math and doing all the things that were required of us. And we were surrounded by the brass, always looking over us.

JR: And you had a uniform too, right?

MH: Right, we wore that blue.

JR: What was it like? What was the uniform like?

MH: It had brass buttons down the front, that's about it, and a collar, just like a regular . . .

JR: With a skirt?

MH: Like one of your . . .

JR: It had a skirt?

MH: Sort of like what you're wearing now, except if it were longer. Exactly like what you have, pockets like that.

JR: So it was like a button-up shirt.

MH: Shirtwaist dress they would call it.

JR: Yeah, yeah.

MH: But I don't wear things with collars anymore, but it had collar and stuff. And then the officers they had their insignia, etc.

JR: And did you have a little name tag?

MH: No, we didn't wear name tags on Kaua'i, but I know that they did on O'ahu. They had more "rank hath its privileges" kind of thing here on the island of O'ahu. Also on O'ahu, there were largely Caucasians, whereas on the neighbor island, Kaua'i especially, the rank and file, we were non-Whites. Our superiors were the Caucasian ladies.

JR: Would you wear the uniform off base, so to speak?

MH: We were so busy laundering, and if you have only two or three, and it took so long to dry, because it was cotton and didn't have any. . . . But sometimes we would all wear our blues, but Mrs. Rice asked us not to do that. We did altruistic work, even on Kaua'i, at an early age, and we liked to help out the Salvation Army. We used to make coffee and fill up their thermoses with coffee. And sometimes we would have to go right after work, so we would still be in our blues, what we call the blues, with that red piping. That was the work uniform. They had a dress uniform, but we didn't buy that. We just bought the work uniform. And then, being that we were helping out with the Salvation Army, which was right in the middle of Līhu'e—I remember one time, we were helping out with the band, the Salvation Army band, standing on the street corner. And so everybody in the neighborhood thought that was what the WARD gals did, sort of like the Salvation Army. And so we were beating on the drums, and then we were passing around that tambourine and asking for money. Yeah, you pass it around. And we sang songs like "Shall We Gather at the River?" I loved all the old Salvation Army songs. And then you'd bang the castanets together. And Mrs. Rice said, "I think it's admirable that you girls want to help out at the Salvation Army, but please do not wear your blue uniforms. Everybody is saying that that's the work that we are doing, the work of the Salvation Army."

So we said, "Yes, Mrs. Rice," we understood. "We're sorry, Mrs. Rice." It made sense.

JR: How did the name Hale Brats come?

MH: Well, the *hale* means house. And in Hawai'i, they just call anything *hale*, like *hale kaukau* means house of food. Go to the *hale*, go into the *hale*. Especially on the neighbor islands, we tend to use Hawaiian words more so than they do here in O'ahu.

JR: It's more the Brats part that I'm wondering about. (Chuckles)

MH: Oh, the Brats. Okay, since we were the youngest, and then we found out we were all gonna be together. We already knew one another from Kapa'a days. And then we were always saying, "Who wants to sleep here, and who's gonna sleep over in that corner?"

"Oh I want to sleep close to the bathroom." And choosing up partners—you know, you had to have a bunk mate. And then we had roller skates, so we used to go roller skating in the cottage, would you believe? And we did things like weenie roasts and marshmallows, and did anything that we could possibly think of. And we had it outside the cottage. The guys would come and join us and so forth. So any mischievous thing that you could think of, (we did it). But to me, it was just plain fun. For example, one time we got off shift, and right in front of our house was a jeep, a beautiful jeep all by itself. And so what we did was, we took it out of gear and we pushed the jeep into a garage, a covered garage, and we locked the doors. And then we went back into the cottage, and then we waited to see who was gonna come out. And of course, an officer came out. And he was looking for his jeep, and he cannot find (it). And you know, we could hardly contain ourselves. We were laughing (so hard), you know.

(Laughter)

MH: And then, we finally had to own up. And of course, we got reprimanded. And then we had to push the jeep out and everything.

And then another one that happened was, we were living right next to the men, and right in front of our cottage was the radio shack, what they call the radio shack. All of the signals from the different radar stations came through the radio shack and went into the information center, to the filter center. And it was underneath the lovely trees that were on this beautiful estate. And then one day a (large) branch fell on the radio shack and demolished the roof. And we thought that was so very funny. We were helping to make the branch fall, you know, and then we were helping with the cleanup stuff, just as if we were so innocent. We were so happy when the branch fell on all that radio equipment. Thought it was great fun. Just dumb things like that.

So we were very soon known as the Brats. And we were always laughing, I imagine, and giggling. You know how it is when you have seven (girls). Like you love to laugh, too. Can you imagine all seven of us, and we're laughing at something like pushing the jeep?

JR: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MH: "Did you see that?" (Laughs) Oh, you wouldn't believe that. And this would go late into the night, and we're all supposed to be sleeping. Then (the men) would yell to us, "Shut up, Hale Brats. Go to sleep!" And you get off the midnight shift, like two A.M., and we're laughing at something. And so then they said, "Oh, those Brats, they (are) at it again." Then one of the guys made a big sign out of sheet metal and painted it real nice and everything. And he put it on the door, and it said "Hale Brats."

(Laughter)

MH: Then as all the cars would (enter the base), the jeeps and the huge command cars, they would say, "Oh, that's where the Brats live. Those are the high school girls still wet behind the ears, the underage ones, the youngsters of the group." So that word stuck with us, the Brats.

And we would do things like not reporting on time (for work). We would be, say, in Kōke'e, and we would be picking fruits—guava, strawberry guavas, and stuff like that. And then one of us would say, "Hey, we really should be starting back, 'cause we're not gonna get back in time."

And we'd say, "Oh, but geez, let's pick a few more."

And when we come back half an hour later, and nobody's talking to us. And then they would say, "Oh, those Brats again."

So then what was given to us were chores to be done in the mess hall, like cleaning up tables and sweeping, stuff that we would normally do (anyway) since we had the mess person in our room, Chinny. She would have us doing the very same things anyhow, whether we were good or . . .

JR: So it didn't matter.

MH: Yeah, didn't matter. Always in there wiping the dishes and washing and stuff like that.

JR: I had another question. You mentioned you got $120 a month.

MH: Right. Wasn't that great?

JR: What happened to that money?

MH: I gave it all to my dad, and then he saved it for me. And then later on when I was going to the university, then he'd say, "Well, this is your money, and so you're entitled to it."

JR: And I only really have one more question about the WARD experience, and that was about the—there was a war going on.

MH: Right.

JR: Right.

MH: A big world war.

JR: There was Midway, all these things.

MH: Right, Battle of Midway.

JR: How did those things affect your job?

MH: Yeah, the Battle of Midway especially, that was the point of no return. After that, things

quieted down. Until that big battle it was pretty active. And after the Battle of Midway, things simmered down, and then the following year, we were disbanded.

JR: That would be, what, '43 or '44?

MH: Yeah, thereabouts.

JR: Yeah, yeah.

MH: Forty-four, I think.

JR: And then, what did you do once the WARDs were disbanded?

MH: Well, let's see. We all got out. We cleaned up the place, and then . . .

JR: Were you sad?

MH: No, because we knew we would see one another.

JR: Oh, oh.

MH: The Brats, we still do. No, we really didn't want to see one another that much.

(Laughter)

MH: We had to get on with our lives. Then we all went back to school. Then my family moved here.

JR: You moved to Honolulu?

MH: Right, Honolulu. My dad was in real estate and insurance, so he found us a lovely home.

JR: He had found a job here, or decided to move . . .

MH: He didn't have to find a job. He established his agency.

JR: Oh, what was the name of the agency?

MH: First it was Insular, I-N-S-U-L-A-R. And then, when he incorporated it with Mr. Chinn Ho—do you remember that name?

JR: Mm hmm [yes].

MH: You do?

JR: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I've read about him. He's a famous . . .

MH: Financier.

JR: Yeah, yeah.

MH: Yeah, right. Then he became affiliated with the [*Honolulu*] *Star-Bulletin*.

JR: Yeah, yeah.

MH: My dad, gradually his company was assimilated into others. And in the 1930s, when we had the closing of the banks by FDR—you remember, that was in '32, the Great Depression. And I remember that very well, because my dad had just put in a lot of money in the bank. He had just deposited the payroll in the bank like the day before or two days before. And then FDR closed down the banks, and he had all of these—what do they call it? In those days it was his idea of being democratic. You know, the democracy at work, all of these CCCs [Civilian Conservation Corps] and all of these other things. They closed down the banks. And my dad was saying, as he moaned and bemoaned the fact that he had lost all the money—'cause you lost all your money when the banks closed, went (broke). He says the people in the bank did not tell him. They knew that the banks were gonna close, and they should've said, "Hey Samson, don't put your money in. We're gonna close up."

JR: But they didn't.

MH: They didn't. And oh, I can still remember his moaning, physically. "Mmmmm," he says, "all my money," and so forth and so on. You know what he did, he (bought) a big vault that he put in his bedroom after that, and he kept his money and all of his important papers (in it), 'cause he didn't trust the banks too much.

JR: Yeah, after that experience.

MH: He put some in the bank. And until he died, I can always remember him with that big vault—he called it "the vault"—in his bedroom. And we would want to know the combination. He'd be twirling around (the knob), and he'd say, "You kids stay out now."

We'd say, "We want to know the combination. We saw left two times, right one time."

(Laughter)

MH: And he's, "No, no, no, no, no." He says, "You kids don't look at it." But in the vault, not only did he keep money and jewelry but he kept all our diplomas.

JR: Oh.

MH: Not only diplomas, for whatever achievements that we gained recognition, he would record it in his book, in his journal, in his beautiful handwriting, and then he would roll up the paper or whatnot, and he would put it in the vault. So from watching him and from his experiences, I've learned to do the same thing about keeping a journal. All my life I've kept journals. That's why I enjoy books. And when we were called upon to bring together the gals of the WARD from fifty years ago, Kaua'i, "Who's gonna be responsible for Kaua'i?" They said, "Mary, you take care of it, 'cause you know what happened then." And I know what happened then because I used to write (things) down in my little journal.

JR: Oh, you still have it?

MH: Yeah, I still have it. I started to tear the pages out, because I don't have any use for it any more. But even in school, like in English classes, I'd have the kids write a journal. At the end of the day, I'd say, "Well, half an hour before dismissal time, get out your journals children, and then you can write."

And at first, they'd write, "This is what we did today. We ate and then we played," and that was all. "I'm done."

I said, "Well, you gotta keep on writing until you hear the bell ring."

They say, "Well, we don't know what to write about."

I said, "Well, you can write about what you're thinking. What are you thinking as you're going about?" I said, "You can write about your friends. You can write about school. You can write about what you like best. You can write about your teachers."

I instilled in them this idea—again from my dad—of writing in a journal, so that one year (ago), Thelma, who taught sixth grade, she was telling me, "You know, Mary, as the kids were about to leave, I had them write thank-you notes and compositions about the most important teacher in their life." She says, "Here, I see Melanie, she's writing page after page. And really, she's pouring out her heart and soul, so I think she's writing about me," meaning Thelma as the most unforgettable teacher.

So she looks over Melanie's shoulder to see what Melanie is writing, and she's writing, "The most unforgettable teacher was Mrs. Hendrickson, and I had her in grade da-da-da-da and these are the fun things that we used to do with her," and all that sort of thing, page after page.

And Thelma said, "I wish I had saved." But she said, "I was so angry at that kid, not writing about me," meaning Thelma. "Writing about you, Mary. And she had you maybe five years [ago] or something." They had remembered the fact that I had been thinking about something other than their being in a situation where they had to be. Like they would write about what they would do outside of class, and stuff like that.

JR: I'm going to have to stop just for a second, okay?

MH: Okay.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

JR: Whereabouts in Honolulu did you guys end up living?

MH: Always in this area, what they call Makiki-Mānoa.

JR: When you came from Kaua'i?

MH: Right, right.

JR: Where exactly?

MH: P-O-K-I, Poki Street, which runs parallel to Punahou Street, off Nehoa.

JR: Oh, oh.

MH: Near Roosevelt High.

JR: A home up there?

MH: We had a home, lovely home.

JR: What school did you go to?

MH: Roosevelt.

JR: I think you were telling me that that was English standard.

MH: Right, in those days. To speak correct English, which I liked.

JR: You didn't have any difficulty passing their entrance exam or whatever?

MH: No, I guess not. It was oral and written. I didn't know that it was so important to be accepted (in)to Roosevelt, I thought it was just another high school. If they didn't take me there, I'd go any place else, McKinley.

JR: What grade were you in at that point, do you remember?

MH: Well, with all my makeup credits and everything, I got out in one year, would you believe.

JR: Oh, so you were a senior when you . . .

MH: Yeah, right. But then I had to make up a lot during summer, just to get to be a senior. And then, just to enter the university again.

JR: So you're class of . . .

MH: I don't know. And I don't go to their reunions, I only go to Kaua'i. . . .

JR: You must remember, though. You're what class?

MH: No, I don't remember, really.

JR: Oh.

MH: Because my sister and I, we were in the same class. We ended up in the same class.

JR: Your younger sister or older sister?

MH: Younger. I caught up with her. And in those days, you didn't even go to graduation exercises.

JR: Oh, so you just got your diploma.

MH: Yeah, who cared about going? Did you ever get your degree, I mean, actually receive your sheepskin in your hand? You actually marched?

JR: I marched because my mother . . .

(Laughter)

JR: She wanted to take pictures.

MH: All right, so you had to get the lei and the whole bit. Well, we didn't care about getting all that stuff. You know how it is. I didn't want to go. My sister was good. She was the good sister, and I was the nonconformist. I said, "Just give me that piece of paper [i.e., the diploma]," and then gave it to my dad and he put it in his (vault). And then years later, when we were cleaning out his (vault) and I found it, I just tore it up.

JR: Oh, you did?

MH: Yeah, really. And I just kept the outside cover, because I thought it was real neat to put stuff inside. But I tore that piece of paper. I mean, paper is nothing. Really. All the degrees and stuff that—well, I would never go for those.

JR: Then you enrolled in the university?

MH: Oh, tried to. They wouldn't take me (at first), because I didn't have enough book learning.

JR: So what did you do?

MH: I had to take summer courses and enrolled in all kinds of courses that the different high schools taught. But especially I remember my science, 'cause I was deficient in science. And especially my chemistry, but I told you that. I had to learn all the formulas and everything, and in a short period of time, just to take the exam. So what's the symbol for potassium? K. Now, why is it K?

JR: You still remember?

MH: Oh yeah. Oh, I remember sugar, CHO. And so, beet sugar is different numbers, you know, but it would be $C_{22}H_{18}$ and O_{11} or something.

JR: Yeah, yeah.

MH: And then there was fruit sugar, fructose. Then there's different kinds of sugar, I imagine, but they all had C and then H—carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen in it. It gets imprinted in your memory, and I just remember going into exams with all of these wonderful facts. Then I had to take lot of zoo[logy] and botany, because I thought that I needed that. I didn't want to dissect the cat. I just didn't want to do that, cut up cats, 'cause I love animals and things. I just couldn't see that. I'm not in for using animals in research, are you?

JR: Me?

MH: Yeah.

JR: Personally, I don't do any research.

(Laughter)

MH: Well, and so I thought, okay, I'll do plants. I don't mind that. Then I remember taking Dr. [Harold] St. John's course, where he would say, "I'm looking at the plumeria out there." He would bring in the stalk of plumeria. Then we would look at the leaf structure, and then we would look at the way the flowers grow. And then, not only did you have to learn the common name, like plumeria, you had to learn the scientific name. And then you had to learn where it came from. Especially you had to learn the leaf structure. He was really hung up on leaf structure. And not only did we have to draw it, but he would flash the picture of the plumeria on the slide projector, onto the screen, and then he would say, "Identify the plant five different ways."

And while you're busy writing, he flashes on the next one. "Wait, wait, wait."

But I enjoyed the courses like that. So when I'm tootling around in the car, I look up at the trees, and I look at them, like I'm doing now, looking at the leaf structure of the coconut palm versus the cherry tree that I have out here. And I love to identify things by their proper names. Like surinam cherry, rather than saying, "That tree out there."

JR: That's what I do.

MH: (Laughs) No, if I learned anything, it was to identify things properly. And I love plants and stuff like that. I learned I had to do that.

JR: I just wanted to get us caught up. You got your teaching degree, right?

MH: Right. And so I finally got into the university. They admitted me, and in the meantime, I kept my part-time jobs. Since I enjoy writing, I had a part-time job at the [*Honolulu*] *Star-Bulletin*, and that's where I met my husband, Ed. And I got to read a lot from the morgue, which is another name for the library there at the *Star-Bulletin*. No matter where I go, I look for the library. And I used to come down with stacks of their *Wall Street Journal*s or other newspapers that we don't have here. And then, the books, the best sellers that they were reviewing. Then I got to read books like *Tales of the South Pacific*, James Michener's books.

When the authors would pass into town, then I would make it a point of meeting them, or getting their autograph, or just looking at them, and think, "Oh wow, he wrote a book." Or, "I heard her on the . . . "

JR: They would come into the newspaper to get interviewed or something like that?

MH: Or to meet the editor or something like that. It seemed to be the hubbub for the action, whatever was doing. And we were on Merchant Street, 125 Merchant Street then. And I'd be at the desk, selling newspapers or whatever, answering the phone and (menial) stuff like that.

JR: Was Riley Allen in charge back then?

MH: Right. And he was a remarkable Scotsman. In fact, I got one of his pictures he (gave) me when I left. You know, (he) autographed it. I was proud of that, because he was a remarkable gentleman.

JR: In what regard?

MH: Well, number one, he could write. And number two, he could speak well. He spoke so fast. One time he told me on the phone to get Jibbin Company. And I called back, I said, "What company?"

"Jibbin Company."

What he was trying to say was Dearborn, D-E-A-R-B-O-R-N, and it came out Jibbin. I went upstairs, and I told him, "You know, sir, sorry, I don't get the name." Then when he saw I was in earnest, I said, "I'm gonna write it down now, since you're always calling this company. So what is it?"

And he says, "Dearborn," then he spelt it out for me.

And being in the WARD, you get to the point where you have to speak up, like I told you. You get to meet people and get to shake hands and to ask questions. And if you don't understand, you say you don't understand, so that when the signals come over the headset, you (aren't) stupid.

So all of us—the Brats, as we call ourselves—there was this common trait that we all have, that if we feel that somebody has done us an injustice, we will write or we will speak up. Kee Soon said that she had just spoken up (at) one of these land meetings, land board meetings. And I said, "What was it about?" And she said about the increase in real property taxes that she resented very much. So she spoke up, she went before the mike. I told her, "Hey, that's great."

And like I started to tell you before you changed tapes, I was active in the labor movement for teachers when it was starting out in the late sixties and the seventies, and we went out on strike in '73. We lost our pay for two weeks, and then they told us we'd all be fired and not be rehired. But we all got rehired, of course. It was for standing up for things like that. And in my little brain, I figure it was because of that upbringing that I had from the (public)

school that I went to, Kapa'a School. You didn't talk against the nuns or the teacher right there in the classroom, but afterward you could complain to the priest or the principal and speak your mind. But when you spoke your mind, then you had to make sense, write it out or something so you wouldn't be crying. "Speak up or shut up."

And then being in the WARD, where we got to meet all of these different men and fellows from all over the United States, strange faces, and got introduced to them and got to find out all about them, then we all had a chance to speak and learn to perfect our public relations, what I call our PR. Now when we gather together, I see all of us (Brats) engaged in talk. Nobody just sits back and doesn't have anything to say. And when we do speak, I always enjoy listening to the (Brats) because they have something to say. It's not just, "I did the wash," or, "I made biscuits," or something (domestic). They're talking about taxes or how (they) feel. The women, especially the women, we feel got a bum deal. And the politicians and the pay—you know, our pay was not all that great. We had to enter into labor unions, like we did for the teachers and established a decent beginning salary for the teachers. Now it's [$]24,000 [per year]. Way back then, it was like, what, [$]9,000. You supposed to be lucky. And the males always used to get more pay than the female teachers, because they were the breadwinners, supposedly. But we always figure, hey, it doesn't really matter. It's how much . . .

JR: Yeah, same work.

MH: . . . work you put out. That's about it. So it's reflected in what we are doing right now. And like Kee Soon had to speak up, saying that she objected to the increase in the real property taxes.

JR: What schools did you teach at during your career?

MH: Well, first I started out what I call the real jobs, because the others were what we call vice, V-I-C-E. That means you just took whatever job was available. My first position was at August Ahrens [School], stuck out in Waipahu, in the middle of the cane fields. And the first time we got assigned that—from personnel, you're assigned to August Ahrens—we [said], "Who is August Ahrens? It sounds more like a private school."

"No, it's public, elementary."

"Where is it?"

"I don't know, out in Waipahu."

We said, "Who else is gonna go out from Honolulu?" They gave us names, and when we got together, we found out later what wonderful people they were.

That same kind of allegiance and setup that I enjoyed in WARD days, I transferred it over to the beginning days of my teaching and all during my teaching career. And then now to my sorority. And so I always seem to have that bonding with the neighborhood, you might say, with family, one sort of family or another. Not only my personal family, of which I'm very proud of—you know, there are five of us in the family—but more for others that are not

blood relatives.

So when we first started out in teaching, we decided to take a dry run and see where August Ahrens was, in the middle of the cane fields and so forth. And then that was the beginning, in answer to your question.

JR: Then after that, you taught . . .

MH: One thing about teachers, we always want to teach closer to our homes so we don't have to travel too far. But from there, I went onto—we all had to take our turn to teach in the country. I taught at Pearl Harbor El—we say el for elementary—and it was mostly officers' children. There was Pearl Harbor El and then there was Pearl Harbor Kai. The Kai (had) the white hats, the men and their families. We had the officers. For example, the "wheels" from Makalapa and the sub base and so forth. And the kids would be driven in limousines or cars with chauffeurs and . . .

JR: Oh boy.

MH: Yeah, really. But nice kids, really. And those were the Pearl Harbor days. And then another early school was the one out in Kāne'ohe, in the country, Ben Parker [Elementary School]. And when I got assigned Ben Parker, I said, "Who is this Benjamin Parker?" Gee, who was he? Was he a minister or overseer on the plantation or one of those? [Reverend Benjamin Parker opened the first school in Windward O'ahu in 1837.]

And then finally I got Kalihi. They told me, "Mary, you got Honolulu."

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

MH: Then I got assigned Kalihi, and this is Kalihi on Likelike Highway. There are many schools in the Kalihi area. There is Kalihi-Kai [School], that means ocean, Kalihi-Uka [School], which is middle, and Kalihi—no, mountain—Kalihi-Waena [School], and then there was just plain Kalihi [Elementary School], that was my school. And again, made some wonderful friends, which I cherish to this day, from the Kalihi area. Because whenever you say, "I teach in Kalihi," everybody says, "Oh, poor thing," you know. Or they say, "Oh wow, what kind of kids you got there?" And I found that they were the nicest children.

We taught way up in the valley, on the way to the tunnel. That last school is Kalihi Elementary School. And so we serviced the families up in the mountains, what we call the "haves." Beautiful homes like these homes here. And then we had the "have-nots," the housing. That's public housing right there, Kam IV Road—or Kamehameha IV Road—right next door to Ka'ewai. We had the "haves" here, the lovely homes, and then we had the "have-nots," the housing kids. We had them in our classrooms, mixed up. But you know, the families---we worked hard for the children to get along from both sides of the track. They invited us to their homes, and we had the loveliest time, Joe. We would have dancing, and it was sort of like—later on, when I lived in New York, it was like the Polish block parties that they have there in Brooklyn. I lived in Brooklyn with Polish people, and we used to have block parties. There would be dancing and same thing, eating and whatnot. Same thing in Kalihi area. They would set up a tent, and fellows would say, "Oh, I have to dance with the

schoolteacher. I'm gonna dance with your teacher."

And so we would dance with the fathers and uncles and whatnot. And we would share the food. We would bring. We would say, "What can we bring? We'll bring dessert." You know, easiest to just drop by the baker or something. And then, a lot of them were Portuguese families, and again I enjoyed all of the Portuguese foods that I had known from my childhood days. It seemed the same thing, block party kind of a deal, only a lot of what they call the *kachi-kachi* music. That's Kalihi.

JR: Yeah, yeah.

MH: You know what *kachi-kachi* is?

JR: Yeah.

MH: That's Puerto Rican kind of.

JR: Yeah, Puerto Rican music.

MH: Then we would sing songs. They would say, "Okay, time for singing." And this is pre-*karaoke* times. And then you had to sing something. You just couldn't sit there and pretend that you were so high above everybody else, what they call a *high muckamuck*. "Okay, the schoolteachers, you guys are next, so be thinking about what song you want to sing." Then we would sing songs. And my husband was so good about allowing me to be silly and foolish.

JR: You mentioned New York. When were you living in New York? I don't remember hearing about that.

MH: Well, we would live for, like, the summer. We would have maybe a month, and so we would go up to New York or different places and live over there for the summer, and then we'd come back. And we could take courses up there, whatever was offered up in Brooklyn. Then my interest went into art, where it is now. I loved to visit, like I told you, the museums of New York City and Brooklyn and to take all of the art courses that are offered. At Ala Wai School, I was the art—still am—the art resource teacher.

JR: You still are?

MH: Yeah.

JR: Oh, I thought you had retired.

MH: Yeah, I did. But then I have a part-time job. I have a part-time job Downtown, and then today is Friday, so today you're into my Ala Wai hours.

JR: Oh, you should have told me.

MH: No, not at all. I already told them. I'll go after we take leave.

JR: Well, I've enjoyed talking to you.

MH: Yeah, I've enjoyed having made a new friend.

JR: Yeah. Well, thank you very much for your time.

MH: Oh, no problem.

END OF INTERVIEW

AN ERA OF CHANGE

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